Psychedelic Tricksters

A True Secret History of LSD

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David Black

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Preface

Like atomic power and artificial intelligence, lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) was discovered in the closing years of World War Two. Since then, atomic bombs and computers have been the constant source of fears that combined they might bring about the destruction of humanity. LSD has aroused similar fears. Albert Hoffman, the Swiss chemist who discovered its effects in 1943, likened the LSD trip to an 'inner bomb'. He warned that, if improperly used and distributed, LSD might bring about more destruction than an atomic detonation. But it has also been argued that, if *properly* used and distributed, LSD use might actually change people's consciousness for the better and help to prevent nuclear war. Professor David Nutt, who sat on the British Labour government's Advisory Committee on the Misuse of Drugs until he was sacked in 2009, argues that the study of psychedelics is essential for understanding the nature of consciousness itself:

> 'This is core neuroscience. This is about humanity at its deepest level. It is fundamental to understanding ourselves. And the only way to study consciousness is to change it. Psychedelics change consciousness in a way that is unique, powerful, and perpetual – of course we have to study them'.*

As is well known, in the 1950s and early '60s the US Central Intelligence Agency used LSD, in secret and illegal experiments, on unwitting subjects. The CIA did so according to Cold War logic: if the Russians could work out how to use LSD in bio-chemical warfare — or in 'brain-washing', as a 'truth drug', or even as a 'Manchurian Candidate' — then the USA needed to work it out first.

In 1953, the CIA launched a top-secret 'mind-control' project, code-named MK-Ultra. The CIA's assets in the US medical profession 'officially' labelled LSD as 'psychosis-inducing drug', only of use in psychiatric analysis and research. Many CIA officers, contractors and assets however, became enthusiastic trippers themselves, in full

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* Quoted in Zoe Cormier, 'Landmark study reveals the effect of LSD on the brain'. *Focus*, 11 April 2016.

knowledge that LSD could produce atrocious as well as enchanting hallucinations. Knowing the secrets of LSD, they thought of themselves as a kind of anti-communist spiritual elite who, unlike the US citizenry at large, were 'in the know'.

But by the end of the 1950s, with no sign of the Russians contaminating the water supply with LSD, there were plenty of signs in the United States that the psychedelic experience was escaping its captors. Some of the researchers in American hospitals – who had little awareness that their work was being secretly sponsored by the CIA — realised that LSD had 'spiritual' implications, i.e. for developing an 'integrative' enlightened consciousness, conducive to visionary creativity. These researchers stressed the importance of 'set and setting' in properly supervised LSD sessions. The English scholar, Aldous Huxley, who took his first LSD trip in 1955, related in his essay *Heaven and Hell* the hallucinogenic experience to the visionary works of William Blake:

> 'Visionary experience is not the same as mystical experience. Mystical experience is beyond the realm of opposites. Visionary experience is still within that realm. Heaven entails hell, and "going to heaven" is no more liberation than is the descent into horror. Heaven is merely a vantage point, from which the divine Ground can be more clearly seen than on the level of ordinary individualized existence'.*

Huxley, though an advocate for psychedelic drugs, wanted them strictly controlled. In contrast, Timothy Leary, who first took LSD in December 1961, became the 'guru' of psychedelia as LSD 'escaped' into the counter-culture of the 1960s.

The 'escape' has been the subject of conspiracy theories which have been weaponised in today's so-called Culture Wars. According to one widely-held view, the entire psychedelic counter-culture of the 1960s was engineered by the CIA as part of a plot by some secret global elite bent on mass mind-control. For elements of the Right, the

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* Aldous Huxley, *Heaven and Hell*, p109 http://www.ignaciodarnaude.com/espiritualismo/Huxley,Aldous,Heaven%20and%20Hell.pdf

psychedelic counter-culture undermined ‘traditional values’ such as patriarchy, nationalism and subservience to authority. On the Left, some see the 1960s hedonism of ‘Sex, Drugs and Rock’n’Roll’ as having been a distraction from politics. The theory, as it has spread, has thrown in extra villains for good measure: satanists, MI6, the psychiatrists of the Tavistock Institute, the Grateful Dead, and Theodor Adorno of the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory, etc, etc.

In truth, the extent of the CIA’s involvement in the psychedelic counter-culture of the 1960s has always been difficult to determine; not least because Sidney Gottlieb, head of MK-Ultra, illegally destroyed the project’s operational files in 1973. Nonetheless, some leading figures of the counter-culture, such as Timothy Leary, can hardly be discussed without reference to the CIA – not least because Leary himself had so much to say about it. In the present work, whilst I pay only scant attention to conspiracy theories, I make no apologies for investigating, where necessary, real conspiracies.

The underground networks of acid producers and distributors on both sides of the Atlantic were described after their downfall in the nineteen-seventies in such terms as ‘Hippie Mafia’ or ‘Microdot Gang’: so out of their heads that they didn’t know any better; or were ‘only in it for the money’; or were tools of organised crime and/or state agencies. In an earlier ebook I noted that nearly everyone involved – the psychedelic revolutionaries, the financiers, intelligence and anti-drugs agencies, CIA-sponsored scientists and researchers – operated to a greater or lesser extent outside of accepted standards of 'legality', or didn't even recognise them; hence the title: *Acid Outlaws: LSD, Counter-Culture and Counter-Revolution*. But although the term ‘outlaw’ certainly fits many of people in this study, it doesn’t fit all of them by any means. Stephen Bentley, ex-undercover police officer and author of *Undercover: Operation Julie - The Inside Story,* takes exception to my use of the term ‘questionable legality’ regarding some of the surveillance methods he and his colleagues used:

> ‘Questionable by who? Illegal – mostly not... Yes, I smoked a lot of hash... and did some cocaine. Technically, that was illegal. Tell me what I was supposed to do given I was undercover. I wasn’t Steve Bentley. I was ‘Steve Jackson’ – wild, carefree, giving all the impression I was a dealer. I’m now 72 years’ old. I don’t care for the

> historical revisionism applied to Operation Julie recently. It was a highly successful and unique police investigation carried out professionally under difficult circumstances'.

On my reference to the 'ham-acting of drunken undercover officers', Bentley retorts:

> 'Maybe you should try living a lie for the best part of a year; doing things alien to you; becoming a different person. Those who know will scoff at the thought of it being an act. It's not. You become someone else – believe me'.

The point is, I concede that although Stephen Bentley mixed with 'acid outlaws' and behaved like one when he was infiltrating them in north Wales in the 1970s, he certainly wasn't one himself. Steve Abrams – who inspired me twenty years ago to write about this subject in the first place – wasn't an outlaw either. He is described in an obituary in *Psychedelic Press* – quite accurately — as a 'psychedelic trickster'. Many of the leading players who feature in this tale were certainly outlaws at various times but primarily they were tricksters. In Carl Gustav Jung's definition of archetypes, the 'Trickster' surfaces in many stories in mythology, folklore and religion. More generally, anthropologists studying indigenous cultures in various parts of the world identify the trickster with cunning crazy-acting animals such as the fox or coyote, shape-shifting gods such as Loki in Norse mythology and rustic pranksters in human form. In the literature of Greek antiquity, Prometheus, the son of a Titan, tricks the gods with his buffoonery and steals fire from heaven for the benefit of human kind, for which he is severely punished by Zeus. As the historian of religion, Klaus-Peter Koepping, puts it:

> 'In European consciousness Prometheus becomes the symbol for man's never-ceasing, unremitting, and relentless struggle against fate, against the gods, unrepentingly defying the laws of the Olympians, though (and this again shows the continuing absurdity) never being successful in this endeavor, which, however, is

> necessary for the origin of civilized life (the ultimate paradox of rule breaking as a rule)'.*

Like fire, psychedelic drugs can be dangerous as well as beneficial. In various ways the tricksters who feature in this book tended to believe that their antics were beneficial to humanity as well as themselves; and in most cases had to suffer the consequences of their actions. CIA MK-Ultra chief, Sidney Gottlieb, believed that his immoral and dishonest actions were outweighed by his patriotism and dedication to science, but his reputation has been posthumously trashed (a biography by Stephen Kinzer calls him as 'the CIA's Poisoner-in-Chief'). On the 'other' side, the reputation of Timothy Leary, who likewise believed he was acting as a patriot and saviour of civilisation, has shape-shifted from brilliant scientist to mystical guru, wanted criminal, wild-eyed revolutionary, renegade informer and finally self-aggrandising 'showboater'.

I sent a copy of the previous book to Tim Scully, a most significant actor in the events unfolded in this story. Scully is a meticulous researcher (he is compiling a history of LSD production in the US) and, as it turns out, a very reliable witness. Scully, born 1944, was in 1966 taken on as apprentice to the famous LSD chemist Owsley Stanley (AKA Bear Stanley). After Owsley withdrew from LSD production following a bust of his tableting facility in December 1967, Scully was determined to continue. After making LSD in successive laboratories in Denver, Scully began to work with fellow psychedelic chemist, Nick Sand (another trickster). Their collaboration led to the establishment in November 1968 of a lab in Windsor, California, which ultimately produced well over a kilo (more than four million 300 μg doses) of very pure LSD that became known as Orange Sunshine.

Scully, in writing to me, pointed to a number of errors in my writings regarding events in the USA. Generously, he provided me with a lot of very useful information: firstly, on how underground LSD production was organised in the United States in the 1960s; secondly, on the relations between the American LSD producers in the

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* Klaus-Peter Koepping, 'Absurdity and Hidden Truth: Cunning Intelligence and Grotesque Body Images as Manifestations of the Trickster'. *History of Religions, Vol. 24, No. 3* (Feb., 1985),

United States, their collaborators in Great Britain, and the ‘Brotherhood of Eternal Love’; and thirdly on the alleged CIA asset, Ronald Stark, who Scully knew and did business with. With further research and fact-checking I realised that none of the previous books on the subject (including mine) have accurately covered these three issues. I hope – whilst making no claim to have written anything like a comprehensive or definitive history of the LSD underground – that this one does.

1 – MK-Ultra: the CIA's 'Mind Control' Project

Sorcery

In 1938, at the laboratories of the Swiss pharmaceutical company, Sandoz, Dr. Albert Hoffman was researching the alkaloids of ergot, a fungus that grows on rye. In the course of this work Hoffman synthesised lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD). He didn't discover LSD's hallucinogenic effects as a drug until five years later when, on April 19, 1943, he ingested some of it and had a very wobbly bicycle ride home. He described his trip as an 'amazing and beautiful' experience, consisting of hallucinations, disturbances in perception, and acceleration of thinking. Hoffman and his colleague, Dr. Werner Stoll, had LSD tested in mental hospitals for its effects on both 'normal and abnormal subjects'. Their initial findings were published in 1947 in the *Schweizer Archiv fur Neurologie und Psychiatrie*.

The chemical romance between US Central Intelligence Agency and lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) can be traced back to November 1948, when a top-secret report on the Sandoz discovery was sent to the Biological and Chemical Warfare Centre in Maryland. US Army consultant in Heidelberg, Germany, Dr. John P Clay, reported on a new 'powerful hallucinatory agent' named lysergic acid diethylamide-25. Clay had learned from a 'closely held' CIA source inside the Sandoz laboratories that research had yielded 'promising' results which 'could be beneficial to psychological warfare themes'.*

In 1949, Viennese psychiatrist Otto Kauders travelled to the USA and gave a conference talk at Boston Psychopathic Hospital on the potential of LSD as a drug for treating schizophrenia. He said that if the drug was able to produce a 'model psychosis' in a test subject, the effects could be studied to find an antidote for the schizophrenia. Intrigued by Kauders' presentation, neurophysicist and CIA consultant Max Rinkel contacted Sandoz and arranged to have a consignment of

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* H Albarelli, *A Terrible Mistake: The Murder of Frank Olson and the CIA's Secret Cold War Experiments*, ps.362-3.

LSD shipped to Boston. It seems that the first person to try the drug on American soil was number two man at the Boston institute, Robert Hyde. The trip made him feel paranoid and act quite out of character in a less than 'pleasant' manner. Rinkel and Hyde tested LSD on a hundred volunteers at the Boston institute and determined that it could induce a 'transitory psychotic disturbance' in 'sane' people.*

For the CIA at this time any psychosis-inducing substance was potentially a weapon of war. In 1950, the CIA launched an operation, code-named 'Bluebird', to investigate how LSD might be used in extracting information from unwitting subjects. In 1951, at the biological warfare facility at Fort Detrick, Maryland, Sidney Gottlieb, head of the Chemicals Division of CIA technical services, took LSD. His trip – the first of many — was supervised by Dr Harold Abramson, a CIA consultant, employed at New York Psychiatric Institute. In 1952, another CIA project, code-named 'Artichoke', began to assess experiments carried out by secret teams in various parts of the world to induce amnesia in unwitting test subjects, using LSD and hypnosis. For the CIA, the issue was, 'Can we get control of an individual to the point where he will do our bidding against his will and even against fundamental laws [like] self preservation?' and 'Can a person under hypnosis be forced to commit murder?' There were, it should be said, dissenting voices, such as the unnamed Artichoke committee member who asked:

> 'What in God's name are we proposing here? Does it not strike anyone but a few that these projects may be immoral and unethical and that they may fly in the face of international laws. What are we really trying to accomplish? Where does respect for life and human dignity come into play?'†

But such rare voices of protest went unheard. According to John Marks, the CIA developed a 'phobia' about Sandoz after US military intelligence reported in 1951 that the Russians had obtained some 50 million doses of LSD from Sandoz. In 1953, a follow-up report from

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* John Marks, *In Search of the Manchurian Candidate*, Chapter 4; Martin Lee and Bruce Shlain, p.39. Acid Dreams: The Complete Social History of LSD, the CIA, the Sixties and Beyond Lee and Shlain, p.20.

† Albarelli, p.231.

military intelligence made the fantastical claim that Sandoz wanted to sell 10 kilos – enough for hundreds of millions of trips – on the open market. As revealed in a CIA report de-classified in 1975, the U.S. military attaché in Switzerland had confused milligrams (1/1,000 of a gram) with kilograms (1,000 grams) – which threw his calculations off by a factor of 1,000,000. But as the report was taken seriously at the time by the CIA, Pentagon officials recommended that the Agency put up $240,000 to buy up all the LSD Sandoz had produced, lest the Russians buy it first. Two CIA representatives were duly dispatched to Switzerland, only to be assured by Sandoz executives that they had only ever been able to produce a total 40 grams of LSD, because they did not have the resources to grow enough ergot to produce anything like 10 kilos. The Sandoz executives were prepared to increase production if the US government was prepared to pay for it, so a deal was brokered 'in the very strictest confidence', by which Sandoz would supply the U.S. Government with 100 grams of LSD a week for an indefinite period. Sandoz also agreed to pass on any information about who else it was supplying with LSD, and about any East European interest in the drug.*

In 1953, scientists at the American Eli Lilly Company got round the Sandoz patent on LSD by finding different synthetic routes, through the 'Garbrecht' and 'Pioch' methods. For the duration of the 1950s there was a plentiful supply of LSD for use by the US military, CIA and 'approved' scientists, doctors and researchers.

For the purpose of identifying scientists who could provide useful experimental research, the CIA assessed about fifty universities and colleges. Sidney Gottlieb – who was known to colleagues as the 'Dark Sorcerer' – convinced the agency's director, Allen Dulles, that mind control ops were the next big thing. Dulles ensured that the projects dreamed up by Gottlieb would be well-funded. In a speech at Princeton University, on April 13, 1953, Dulles warned that 'Communist spies could turn the Americans mind into a phonograph playing a disc put on its spindle by an outside genius over which it has no control'. A few days later he approved the launching of MK-Ultra, a top-secret CIA project headed by Sidney Gottlieb, which was

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* Marks, ps. 65-66.

designed to extend the Artichoke research into the study of 'mind control'.*

CIA Technical Services reported: 'there is no question that drugs are already on hand (and new ones are being produced) that can destroy integrity and make indiscreet the most dependable individual'. A memo dated 1955 spoke of interest in material, 'which renders the induction of hypnosis easier… which will produce amnesia for events preceding and during their use… which alter personality structure in such a way that the tendency of the recipient to become dependent upon another person is enhanced'.†

For a biological weapons research project code-named MK-Naomi, Sidney Gottlieb at Fort Detrick procured materials for testing as incapacitants and as methods of assassination. Ray Treichler, a CIA contractor, was responsible for procuring samples of chemicals from American drug companies for the research. Purchases from European companies were handled by Dr. Harris Isbell, a CIA consultant at the Lexington Addiction Research Centre. Later, in 1966, the CIA created the Amazon Natural Drug Company for researching psycho-active herbs for bio-warfare potential. This venture involved planting CIA undercover operators in anthropological expeditions for the purpose of closely monitoring the field research and obtaining samples for analysis at Edgewood Arsenal and Fort Detrick.‡

Midnight Climax

In New York, in 1952, former OSS spy, George White, was officially 'loaned out' from the Federal Narcotics Bureau to the CIA as a consultant contractor. His assignment was to set up and run an experiment code-named Operation Midnight Climax in a Greenwich Village safe-house. This consisted of a roomy, artfully decorated apartment within a large red-brick house on Bedford Street. White employed female assistants (sometimes prostitutes) to lure guests to

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* Stephen Kinzer, *Poisoner in Chief: Sidney Gottlieb and the CIA Search for Mind Control*; Tom McNeil, *CHAOS, Charles Manson, the CIA and the Secret History of the Sixties*, p.353.

† Marks, pp.73-4

‡ Marks, p.203.

the safe-house where they would be drugged with various substances and observed from behind two-way mirrors by a surveillance team equipped with recording equipment. CIA counter-intelligence chief James Angleton assisted White by procuring the services of the magician, John Mulholland, to train operators in sleight-of hand techniques for delivering doses to the guests. Robert Lashbrook, Gottlieb's deputy at Technical Services, was CIA project monitor for White's operation. The Greenwich Village safe-house was the first of several to be set up in various cities across the US.*

Sidney Gottlieb said of George White that he was especially useful to the CIA because of his vast network of criminal associates and informers: 'George [White] conducted a good number of experiments on people he encountered in his professional work: criminals, narcotics dealers, gangsters... He told me a number of times that the sessions yielded a fair amount of information'. White himself wrote in 1971: 'I don't dislike criminals. I have a lot of friends who are murderers. When I used to hang around with gangster types, I had very good times in their company'.†

The collaboration of the OSS with the Italian Mafia in World War Two is well known and documented, as is the CIA's post-war involvement with the heroin trade, which helped to spread the plague of addiction across the world. The history of the CIA's financing of political allies around the world by means of illicit drug dealing is told in Alfred McCoy's book, *The Politics of Heroin*. In both Europe and Asia after the Second World War:

> 'the CIA allied themselves with major drugs brokers and other crime syndicates. In sum what they did was to sanction the start of a flow of narcotics from the Middle East through Europe into the United States where they had clearances to land at Air Force and National Guard bases without being inspected by customs'.‡

Pierre Lafitte, George White's Italian-French 'special employee' and assistant in Operation Midnight Climax, had spent

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* Marks, p.23,pp.87-104; Albarelli, p.227.

† Albarelli, p.392.

‡ Interview with Alfred McCoy, *Z Magazine* January 1991. druglibrary.org/schaffer/heroin/McCoy2.htm

decades in the company of heroin traffickers, slavers, assassins, and Corsican Mafiosi. Lafitte's henchman, François Spirito, had been a partner-in-crime of Paul Carbone, the Mafia 'Emperor of Marseilles', who was assassinated by the French Resistance in December 1943 for collaboration with the Nazis. After the war Spirito went on the run and was condemned to death in absentia by a French court for treason. Living in the USA under an assumed name he smuggled heroin with the New York Lucchese Mafia clan until 1951, when he was arrested and imprisoned. Spirito later claimed that he had been subjected to 'terrible experiments' at Atlanta Federal Penitentiary where, beginning in 1951, a secret CIA sub-project run by Dr. Carl Pfeiffer, sought to produce a 'model psychosis characterized by visual and auditory hallucinations', using LSD and other substances. According to Sidney Gottlieb, 'We learned a lot from the Atlanta experiments. The agency learned that a person's psyche could be disturbed by those means'. Released in 1953, Spirito resumed employment with Lafitte.*

Heartbreak Hotel: the Death of Frank Olson

On Wednesday November 18 1953 MK-Ultra chief Sidney Gottlieb convened a conference of selected Fort Detrick staff at a secluded lodge by Deep Creek Lake, Maryland. After the evening meal, Gottlieb's deputy, Robert Lashbrook, served glasses of Cointreau surreptitiously laced with LSD to several of the officers. A short time later, Gottlieb asked, 'Has anyone noticed anything wrong?' One of them, Frank Olson, a contractor for the CIA at Fort Detrick, felt the dose kicking in and became paranoid; he suspected he was being trapped. Returning home to his family on Friday, Olson fell into a deep depression and told his wife he was worried that he may have made 'a terrible mistake'.

The following Monday, back at work, Olson informed his division chief, Colonel Vincent Ruwet, that he wanted to resign. Ruwet reported this to Gottlieb, who decided that Olson should be 'treated', rather than be allowed to resume civilian life outside of their control. HR Albarelli, in his book, *A Terrible Mistake: the Murder of Frank Olson and the CIA's Secret Cold War Experiments*, says that

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* Albarelli, p.302.

Olson was no whistle-blowing martyr undergoing an epiphany over the terrible experiments he had helped organise, which involved mass destruction of animals, especially monkeys, as well as harmful experiments on humans. By various accounts, Olson, though a kind 'family man', was an anti-semite, with Far-Right leanings. Stressed with overwork and suffering from stomach ulcers, he wanted to get out of working at Fort Detrick. But for his CIA bosses 'wanting out' suggested that he was mentally unstable and therefore a security risk. Worse still, there were suspicions that he may have been talking about his secret work to 'unauthorized persons'.

Gottlieb assigned Ruwet and Lashbrook to take Olson to New York for psychiatric assessment . After the three of them checked into the Statler Hotel, they were joined by psychiatrist and CIA consultant-contractor, Harold Abramson. After examining Olson, Abramson recommended that he should be admitted to a CIA-approved mental home in Maryland. Olson first agreed, but en route to the mental home he changed his mind, pleading that he wanted just 'to disappear'. Lashbrook and Ruwet then drove Olson back to New York for further consultations with Abramson. They checked in again to the Statler Hotel on 27 November and called in Abramson, who gave Olson a glass of bourbon and a dose of nembutal sleeping tablets, and left. Hours later, Olson went to his death through a closed window of their eleventh floor room, shattering the glass.

Albarelli claims that Olson was thrown through the Statler Hotel window by George White's 'special employee', Pierre Lafitte, and his assistant, François Spirito. In 1953 Lafitte had been employed in several New York hotels, doing various routine jobs as cover for his surveillance work for George White. Armand Pastore, the Statler night-manager who discovered the dying Olson on the pavement, told Albarelli that Lafitte had been working at the Statler Hotel under an assumed name the night Olson died. Weeks later, the US immigration authorities arrested Spirito on a French extradition warrant for treason and deported him back to France, where he served one year in prison, before going back into business as a heroin-smuggler.*

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* Ibid. ps.689-698.

If Frank Olson was ‘terminated with extreme prejudice’ at the behest of the CIA, what could have been the deep secret he had knowledge of, revelation of which would have been seen by the CIA as catastrophic? According to Albarelli the answer is to be found in a dreadful incident that took place in southern France in August 1951. Two hundred and fifty people in the village of Pont-Saint-Esprit were infected by a strange malady which made them wildly delirious: dozens were carted off to an insane asylum, four people died through self inflicted injuries such as jumping out of windows, and many more were injured. ‘Ergotism’ seemed the probable cause. This phenomenon, known during the Middle Ages as ‘St. Anthony’s Fire’, was related to a naturally-produced ergot that could contaminate bread-making.

One thing common to the victims of the Pont-Saint-Esprit poisoning was that all of them had consumed bread made at one village bakery. In August 1951, LSD was practically unknown as a hallucinatory drug; but the extensive press coverage of the Pont-Saint-Esprit incident at the time soon caught the attention of Albert Hoffman and Werner Stoll of the Sandoz company, just over the border in Switzerland. They immediately travelled to Montpellier University and briefed the medical experts handling the case. Hoffman pointed out that the effects of LSD could be condensed into two main categories: 1. ‘magical and enchanting hallucinations of colours, in the nature of an Ali Baba's cave’; and 2. atrocious hallucinations, including changes in distances, or with the ceiling of a room descending and the walls closing in on the victim’. He explained how ergot forms on rye grain under certain conditions of humidity to liberate several alkaloids of ergot (the summer of 1951 had been humid in the region).*

Albarelli argues that the seemingly ‘obvious’ explanation of ergotism would have provided cover for a CIA experiment to test LSD or some other psychoactive substance on the population of a small town in a foreign country. This however, would have been difficult to achieve: LSD cannot be sprayed effectively from the air (as it is too heavy); it cannot contaminate a reservoir (because of the chlorine

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* John G Fuller, *The Day of Saint Anthony's Fire*, Chapter 12.

content); and if LSD is put into the ingredients of bread it gets burned off in the baking process. Albarelli's theory depends on CIA assets having entered the bakery and contaminated the bread after it had been baked. Albarelli does present some evidence of Olson and some of his colleagues having made visits to France in the early 1950s, but there is no evidence of CIA agents or anyone else infiltrating Pont-Saint-Esprit to do the deed. In a quiet rural village such as Pont-Saint-Esprit there would have been a high risk that any CIA team would have been noticed and exposed.

Apart from Pont-Saint-Esprit theory, others have been put forward to explain the 'terrible mistake' Olson may have made that endangered the secrets of the CIA. They include use of truth drugs in the torture of Soviet agents and ex-Nazi 'expendables' in black sites in Europe during the early 1950s; and the alleged use by the US of biological weapons in the Korean war. None of the theories are conclusive, however, let alone convincing. In *Acid: A New Secret History of LSD* (2001) I summarised the claim by British writer, Gordon Thomas, that in the summer of 1953 Frank Olson met psychologist, Dr William Sargant of St Thomas's Hospital, London at Porton Down chemical warfare research installation and confided in him about some serious misgivings he had concerning the testing of truth serums on 'expendable' human subjects. Thomas claimed that Sargant then recommended to MI6 that Olson be denied access to Porton Down, knowing that MI6 would also inform the CIA of their assessment of Olson as a 'security risk'. Albarelli makes it clear that Thomas's story does not stand up to scrutiny and is either fantasy or disinformation. Anthony Frewin, in a review of Albarelli's book in *Lobster*, summer 2010, writes 'Thomas' misinformation has legs and now it's all over the Net and in many books. Take, as an example, and this is one of many, David Black's Acid: A New History of LSD (London: Vision Paperbacks, 2001), pp. 27-34, where the gospel according to Thomas – Olson, White, Sargant, Porton Down, etc. – is retold as if it were scripture.' *Mea culpa.*

In 1994, Frank Olson's son, Eric, had his father's body exhumed. The body had been buried in a sealed concrete vault and was semi-mummified. A new autopsy was able to determine firstly, that the absence of cuts on the body made it unlikely that Frank Olson had jumped through the glass window of the Statler hotel room; and

secondly, that an impact wound on the skull above the eyes was consistent with a blow to the head having been inflicted to render him unconscious before the fall.

In 2016 Eric Olson persuaded Seymour Hersh, a Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative journalist, to take a 'second look' at the case. Hersh contacted a high-level intelligence source who was able to access top-secret documented information on the death of Frank Olson. The source had taken notes, which he recited to Hersh. On the strength of his source's findings, Hersh realised that when he last investigated MK-Ultra and the Olson case back in 1975 he had been taken in by the CIA cover-story of LSD-induced suicide. Following the incident in 1953, Olson's CIA employers had told his widow, Alice, that his fall had been a suicide caused by work-related stress. In 1975 Alice discovered this had been a lie. The Rockefeller Commission revealed that Olson's alleged suicide had been induced by a dose of LSD given to him surreptitiously by CIA officers, days before his death. An apology to the family was duly issued by President Gerald Ford on behalf of the CIA.

The 1994 autopsy posed a new question for the Olson family: were they now owed an apology for the murder of Frank Olson by the CIA? Hersh's source suggested that there had been 'mechanism' rather than an ad hoc procedure for eliminating 'undesirable' dissidents. According to the 1975 congressional testimony of Lawrence Houston, the general counsel for the CIA at the time of Olson's death, in early 1954, a Memorandum of Understanding was drawn up by representatives of the CIA and the US Justice Department stating that the CIA would not be prosecuted for serious crimes if a claim for national security could be invoked. Suspiciously, in the years leading up to this agreement several US officials who had been denounced by McCarthyites as 'pro-Soviet' died from allegedly jumping out of the windows of high buildings in New York.*

Much to Eric's disappointment, Hersh felt unable to write an article definitively accusing the CIA of having his father killed: firstly, because he felt obliged to protect his source; and secondly, because the revelations were uncorroborated by any other source. In an

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* Seymour Hersh, interviewed by Errol Morris. *Wormwood*, episode 6, Netflix, 2017

interview with filmmaker Errol Morris in *Wormwood*, the 2017 Netflix drama-documentary about the Olson case, Hersh says:

> 'The CIA was using LSD on people. That would be bad. But the real bad was something worse; that they killed him. But I don't know any way that I can publish it... We're talking about journalism 101 here... It's not about information. It's about what one had to do to find the Olson story from the inside... Frank was viewed as a dissident. You understand that in 1953 if you thought someone was detrimental to the war against the Russians, you'd have no problem dealing with him. It wouldn't be a question of just telling him to leave the agency... Think about that. Someone who has secrets? I mean are you kidding me? Frank was out there and he was letting them know he was marching to a different drummer, and you couldn't do it back then. He was a man that was profoundly distressed about what he was learning. And he was "dangerous"; that I can tell you. I can't tell you more'.

Human Ecology: an MK-Ultra Front

Some of the CIA's secret experimentation was carried out under the cover of front organisations. One such was the Institute of Human Ecology, most of whose board of directors were unaware that they were being used by the CIA as a front to contract out MK-Ultra research in 44 universities, 15 research centres, three prisons and twelve hospitals.* The civilian consultants in these institutions were rarely told anything about how their findings were being analysed and synthesised with findings from other projects.†

At Iona State Hospital during the years 1955-58, medics used hypnosis and LSD to test sex offenders for their abilities to conceal secrets, the avowed purpose of which was to help develop interrogation techniques. As neurologist Dr. Harold Wolff put it in a CIA report: 'The problem faced by the physician is quite similar to that faced by the communist interrogator'. At Mt. Sinai Hospital, New

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* Marks, p.127, p.197.
† Ibid. p.127, p.197.

York, CIA consultants Robert Hyde and Harold Abramson provided Sidney Gottlieb with 'operationally pertinent materials' of use to intelligence agencies which, when administered, might result in:

'a. disturbance of memory;
b. discrediting by aberrant behaviour;
c. alteration of sex patterns;
d. eliciting of information;
e. creation of dependence.'*

As John Marks puts it,

> 'Any professional caught trying the kinds of things the Agency came to sponsor – holding subjects prisoner, shooting them full of unwanted drugs – probably would have been arrested for kidnapping and aggravated assault. Certainly such a researcher would have been disgraced among his peers. Yet, by performing the same experiment under the CIA's banner, he had no worry from the law. His colleagues could not censure him because they had no idea what he was doing. And he could take pride in helping his country'.†

The researchers could also make extra money from having their research classified as secret; the rationale being that the researcher should be suitably renumerated for accepting confidentiality.

Personality Assessment

It was not enough for the MK-Ultra controllers to test the effects of 'substances which alter the personality structure'. There had to be complimentary research into the various 'types' of personality being tested. In Operation Midnight Climax, CIA psychologist John Gittinger was one of those behind the two-way mirror at the safe house in San Francisco, observing the drugged up johns. Gittinger was bankrolled by the Human Ecology Fund to develop a method which would enable CIA officers to predict how a particular individual would behave in 'certain circumstances'. Using as a model the standard 11-part IQ test developed by David Wechsler, Gittinger

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* Ibid. p.63.
† Ibid. p.33.

established his own Personality Assessment System. His system divided personalities into, for example, *internalizers* (who can cope with distractions by withdrawing into their inner resources), *externalizers* (who are easily distracted by external stimuli and more demanding of gratification), *adaptive* types (who have the 'charisma' to establish their presence in groups) and *uniform* types (who hold back and are more likely to be ignored).

Gittinger argued that anxiety in an individual was the result of tension between the surface personality and the underlying personality type. If whatever adjustments had been made to compensate for this tension could be measured, then it could be exploited. Methods were devised for observing a person's behaviour discreetly and 'working backwards' in order to predict how the person would have scored if he or she had taken the Weschler test. Some of the questions posed were: 'Was the target sloppy or neat? Did he relate to women stiffly or easily? How did he hold a cigarette and put it in his mouth?' MK-Ultra assets at prisons and mental hospitals took the Weschler scores of junkies and sex offenders to help identify addictive personalities and those prone to what was seen as sexual deviancy. From behind a two-way mirror in a 'party room' at Boston Psychopathic Hospital, CIA adviser Robert Hyde studied the effects of alcohol on people who had taken the Weschler test and observed that internalisers withdrew into themselves while externalisers became slobbish. At Mt. Sinai Hospital, Harold Abramson and Hyde found that under the influence of LSD, internalisers could cope with their inner states, whilst externalisers were more likely to have bad trips. *

Many in CIA Technical Services actually believed Gittinger had mastered his system to the point where he could look at nothing more than the scores on a subject's Weschler chart and identify his or her weaknesses. As one former case officer told author John Marks,

> '… you pick the thing most fearful...If his greatest fear is that you can't trust him... you overload your pitch with your ability to do it. Other people need structure, so you tell them exactly what they will need to do. If you leave it

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* Ibid. ps.164-181.

> open ended, they'll be scared you'll ask them to do things they're incapable of'.*

The CIA, in its relations with police and intelligence agencies of client states, provided a service to test candidates for undercover work and interrogation of suspects. John Marks points out that there was often a 'devilish twist' to this service. For example, in the case of the anti-terrorist unit of the Uruguayan police, CIA personality testers looked for applicants who were susceptible to greed or sexual obsession and who had 'very dependent psychologies', needing 'strong direction'. 'Certain types were more recruitable,' one former agent told Marks. 'I looked for them when I made my reports… Any time the company spent money for training a foreigner, the object was that he would ultimately serve our control purposes'.†

In 1963, the CIA Inspector General expressed concern in a secret internal report to President John F Kennedy regarding 'Personality Assessment' projects he had discovered were run by MK-Ultra. He pointed out that the aim was to turn the perceptive and imaginative CIA case officer into, 'a practitioner in the art of assessing and exploiting human personality and motivations for ulterior purposes… prime objectives are control, exploitation, or neutralisation. These objectives are innately anti-ethical rather than therapeutic in their intent'.‡

MK-Ultra and the other CIA 'mind control' projects remained the deepest of secrets until 1975 when their existence was revealed by the Rockefeller Report to the President. Admiral Stansfield Turner, presenting the findings, said:

> 'The drug program was part of a much larger CIA program to study possible means for controlling human behaviour. Other studies explored the effects of radiation, electric shock, psychology, psychiatry, sociology, and harassment principles'.§

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* Ibid. Chapter 10.

† Ibid. ps.154-6

‡ CIA Inspector General, *Report on Inspection of MKULTRA*. https://publicintelligence.net/cia-ig-mkultra/

§ Marks, p.23.

The 1975 report stated that the MK-Ultra projects had been reorganised back in 1963 into an ‘operational support program’, named MK-Search, and that all such programs had ended in 1972. However, no guarantee was given that mind-control projects had not led to new researches and new operations that had simply been re-categorized. By this time, investigative journalists were on the case, and victims of LSD ‘experiments’ were initiating legal actions against hospitals, prisons and the US Armed Forces. Unfortunately, Sidney Gottlieb had already launched a devilish pre-emptive strike against the campaigns for disclosure: in 1973 he had persuaded the outgoing CIA Director, Richard Helms, to order the illegal destruction of all the operational files for the mind-control projects, including MK-Ultra. But despite the destruction of the files, John Marks, a former State Department official, dug into the existing archives and was able to access the financial records of MK-Ultra and similar projects, some of which yielded important information. In addition, Marks interviewed CIA insiders who had been involved and also accessed relevant documentation from non-CIA sources.*

* Ibid. ps.148-153.

2 – How the CIA Failed the Acid Test

Magic Mushrooms

The term ‘psychedelic’ was first coined at a medical conference in New York in 1957 by Humphrey Osmond, a British psychiatrist at Saskatchewan University Hospital. Osmond used mescaline and LSD in psychotherapy for alcoholics. That same year, the May 13, 1957 issue of Henry Luce’s *Life* magazine – at the time the most popular magazine in the United States – featured an illustrated article entitled ‘Seeking the Magic Mushroom’: ‘A New York banker goes to Mexico's mountains to participate in the age-old rituals of Indians who chew strange growths that produce visions’. The article, by Gordon Wasson, centred on the Mazatec ritual in Oaxaca, Mexico. Wasson and his wife, Valentina, spent four consecutive summers in the remote mountains of Mexico, ‘on the trail of strange and hitherto unstudied mushrooms with vision-giving powers’. Valentina Wasson was interviewed for an article on the same subject, entitled ‘I Ate the Sacred Mushroom’, which went out to the 12 million subscribers of *This Week* magazine, May 19, 1957. Gordon Wasson wrote in *Life* magazine:

> ‘The mushrooms sharpen, if anything, the memory, while they utterly destroy the sense of time... When it seemed to us that a sequence of visions had lasted for years, our watches would tell us that only seconds had passed. The pupils of our eyes were dilated, the pulse ran slow. We think the mushrooms have no cumulative effect on the human organism.... The mushrooms present a chemical problem. What is the agent in them that releases the strange hallucinations? We are now reasonably sure that it differs from such familiar drugs as opium, coca, mescaline, hashish, etc. But the chemist has a long road to go before he will isolate it, arrive at its molecular structure and synthesize it. The problem is of

> great interest in the realm of pure science. Will it also prove of help in coping with psychic disturbances?'

Nearly thirty years later, in 1985, Robert Forte, a young student of entheogens, was taken on by Wasson to assist with the archives at his home in Connecticut. Later Forte was given the rights to Wasson's books on the role of the mushroom in ancient religions so he could republish new editions. In an interview with Wasson in October, 1985, published in Forte's first book, *Entheogens and the Future of Religion*. One 'touchy' subject that came up was the involvement of the CIA in his Mexican field trips. In 1978, John Marks' book, *The Search for the Manchurian Candidate*, had revealed that Wasson's Mexican field trips had been funded by the CIA and classified as MK-Ultra Sub-Project 58.

> '*Robert Forte*: I understand that the CIA was right on your trail going down to Mexico. Could you say more about their interest in this?
> *Gordon Wasson*: Well, I won't say anything very strong or interesting. The CIA thought that they might be able to apply this to war, and they wished to investigate it. They called me up and asked whether I would work with them, and I said, "Give me a day to think it over." I called them up the next day and said I would not. It would tie my hands, since I could not talk anymore. And so I said I would not. I knew much more than they did about it. And then they put on my trail a man, a chemist, from the University of Delaware. He came to me representing a foundation in West Virginia, the Geschickter Foundation, and said that he wished to see these mushrooms, and go down there to see how they worked. He said if I would take him along in my party he would help finance the trip. Well, that was rather important for us because these trips are a nuisance financially. I said, "All right we will take you along." And I took him along, though he was not a great success on the trip. This was written up later in a book on the CIA by John Marks (1980). He devotes a chapter to this episode in the CIA's history'.

Forte recalls, 'Wasson told me that the CIA secretly infiltrated his mission. And that's not true. Wasson was working hand and glove with the CIA for a long period of time. This was a deliberate operation'. Forte accessed documents showing that the expedition, as well as the publicity it was given in the US media, were part of an MK-Ultra operation. Wasson, Forte realised, had fed John Marks a tradecraft cover story: in order to bury any evidence of his witting involvement in a CIA operation, he took along with him Dr. James Moore (the chemist from Delaware) who was himself operating under the cover of the Geschickter Fund, a CIA front organisation. Wasson presumably knew that if the CIA's involvement in the mission ever came to light – which it did – then Wasson could pin it on Moore — which he did.

The success of Wasson's expedition in Mexico had been totally dependent on the goodwill of a Mazatec *curandera* (shaman) named Maria Sabina, who initiated them into a night time ceremony at a remote village in the Oaxaca mountains. The subsequent publicity generated by Wasson's article in *Life* magazine had a destructive effect on the entheogen practices of communities such as Sabina's. As thousands of Beatniks and other fun-seekers flocked to Mexico to do a mushroom trip, the corrupt Mexican police reacted by harassing the indigenous people for 'drug-trafficking'.*

Why would the CIA have wanted to introduce into American society the psychedelic mushroom, which had hitherto only been known to a handful of anthropologists of Meso-American culture? Sidney Gottlieb hoped that James Moore would be able to isolate the active ingredient of the magic mushrooms in his lab. This would provide MK-Ultra with a new drug that would remain an 'agency secret'. Gottlieb's plan failed, because French chemist Roger Heim, who managed to culture mushrooms in his lab from spore prints he had made in Mexico, sent samples to Albert Hoffman at Sandoz in Switzerland. Hoffman and his colleagues isolated the active ingredient and chemically reproduced it to make a new drug, which Sandoz patented as psilocybin.†

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* Ibid. p.117.
† Ibid. p.115.

Harvard Trips

Not everyone who was unwittingly financed by the CIA through its front organisations shared the aims and outlook of Sidney Gottlieb and the American military-industrial complex. One such was Philip Slater, a Harvard graduate research student who conducted LSD experiments with under-graduate volunteers at Boston Psychopathic Hospital in the years 1952-53. The first of these studies was funded by the Geschickter Foundation; the second by the Human Ecology Fund. Slater was quite unaware that both of them were CIA fronts; or that the head of his project, Robert Hyde, was, like his boss, Max Rinkel, a CIA consultant contractor. Slater's working group, which consisted of him, his fellow researchers, and a number of hospital staff, made themselves the first subjects of the LSD experiments; 'so we would know what the hell we were dealing with', says Slater. The studies went way beyond the 'official' definition of LSD as a psychotomimetic drug: 'The point was to make people crazy. Yet despite the forbidding setting and conceptualization of the experience, most of us found it rewarding and transcendent'. Slater drew the personal conclusion that the LSD experience undermines the authoritarian ego:

> '...when the ego is authoritarian, it prevents a lot of stuff from getting to the brain. It's like the ego is a repressive dictator... First of all there's no distinction between the despot and the nation, there's no distinction between the ego and the personality. What's good for me is good for the country. What's good for the ego is good for the organism... LSD was a very strong force in the democratization of the organism, let's say, and that reflects itself outside as well, because you can't really separate them. You've got one, you've got the other'.*

Timothy Leary arrived at similar conclusions ten years later. When Slater was working with LSD in Boston, Leary was in California, still pursuing a fairly orthodox career in psychiatric research. He later described himself during this period as 'an anonymous institutional

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* Interview with Philip Slater, Robert Forte (Ed.), *Timothy Leary: Outsider Looking In*, p.10, ps.225-41.

employee who drove to work each morning in a long line of commuter cars and drove home each night and drank martinis... like several million middle-class, liberal, intellectual robots'.*

From 1952 to 1958, Leary was the Director of the Kaiser Foundation for Psychological Research in Oakland, California, where he devised a personality test, known as 'The Leary'. This was used by numerous institutions, notably the CIA, to test prospective employees. Leary also gave lectures at the Berkeley Institute for Personality Assessment, where he renewed contact with Frank Barron, a graduate school classmate. Barron had been researching the bio-chemical basis of genius and the difference between genius and insanity. Barron had taken sacred mushrooms during a trip to Mexico and told Leary that he thought the drug might be of great significance for the study of the mind. In early 1960, when Leary joined the Harvard Center for Personality Research, he brought Barron onto the project's board of directors.†

On Barron's recommendation Leary took mushrooms for the first time during a trip to Mexico in summer 1960. Psilocybin, he discovered, opened up his awareness and allowed him to 'spiral down the DNA ladder of evolution to the beginning of life'. He now realised why Barron was so enthusiastic about the drug's mind-expanding potential, and got Barron to help set up the Harvard Psilocybin Project. Psilocybin pills for testing on student graduate volunteers were supplied free of charge by the Sandoz company. When Barron left Harvard to return to Berkeley in 1962, Richard Alpert took his place.

No sooner had the project got off the ground, when Englishman Michael Hollingshead entered Leary's life. Born Michael John Shinkfield, Hollingshead had been working in New York for the Institute for British-American Cultural Exchange, which he described as 'a semi-official British propaganda agency in the field of international cultural relations'. Hollingshead and another Englishman, Dr John Beresford, had obtained a gram of LSD (enough

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* Timothy Leary, and Allen Ginsberg*, High Priest, p.4.*

† Frank Barron, 'An Unfinished (R)evolution', in Forte, op. cit. ps.24-30; Timothy Leary, *Flashbacks, A Personal and Cultural History of an Era*, ps. 16, **17,** 29, 30. 34. 48,49,60,61.

for 5000 trips) from Sandoz (ostensibly for research into back pain) for $285. With Hollingshead's LSD, Leary entered a mode of being in which 'nothing existed except whirring vibrations and each illusory form was simply a different frequency'. It was, Leary said, 'The most shattering experience of my life... Since that time I have been acutely aware that everything I perceive, everything within and around me, is a creation of my own consciousness'. The Harvard psychedelic project immediately 'bade farewell to picturesque psilocybin'. Leary eventually conducted about 3,000 sessions for graduates and faculty members and 1,000 for outside volunteers.*

At the Palo Alto Mental Research Institute in California, Gregory Bateson, English anthropologist, philosopher, and veteran of the OSS, had been first turned on to LSD by Harold Abramson, the CIA consultant.† Abramson also turned on Frank Fremont-Smith, head of the Macy Foundation, which funded Abramson's CIA work. Ironically, it was the Macy Foundation that spelled out the official line on LSD at an international conference it organised in 1959. The chair of the conference, Dr. Paul Hoch (CIA consultant and US Army Chemical Corps contractor) dismissed claims about LSD's therapeutic qualities. LSD and mescaline were, he pronounced, 'essentially anxiety producing'.‡

Dr. Leo Hollister, who was testing LSD at the same hospital as Bateson at Palo Alto, regarded the approach of most of the people who attended Macy conferences on hallucinogenic drugs as 'unscientific'. In 1960 Hollister tried drugs out on volunteers. One of them was Ken Kesey, who took a job at the hospital as a psychiatric aide. Out of that experience, and drawing inspiration from using hallucinogenic drugs, Kesey wrote his novel, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest.* As John Marks comments, 'CIA officials never meant that the likes of Leary, Kesey, and [Allen] Ginsberg should be turned on'. Yet such figures 'created the climate whereby LSD escaped the government's control and became available by the early sixties on the black market': 'The MK-Ultra experts were mainly on a control trip,

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* Timothy Leary, *Flashbacks*, ps.118-121..

† Marks, ps.120-121

‡ Lee and Shlain, p.69.

and they proved incapable of gaining insight from their own LSD experiences of how others less fixated on making people do their bidding would react to the drug'.* According to Kesey,

> '... with the advent of acid, we discovered a new way to think, and it has to do with piecing together new thoughts in your mind. Why is it that people think it's so evil? What is it about it that scares people so deeply?... Because they're afraid that there's more to reality than they have ever confronted'.†

Aldous Huxley, a board member of Leary and Alpert's Harvard project, was certain that LSD could bring great benefits to humanity, but he didn't want to let it loose amongst the masses. Like a good Renaissance cabalist, Huxley took the classical Platonic position on the quest for therapeutic and magical virtue: the causal chain of reality begins and ends with the psychological other world beyond matter in which, as Plato put it, 'the colours are much purer and more brilliant than they are down here'. In Huxley's words, the Ideal 'descends to earth, and mounts again to the theological other of heaven'. But as Plato would have it, this vision is restricted to the elite of 'blessed beholders'. Huxley did think however, that LSD might be useful in treating mental illnesses such as schizophrenia. He believed LSD could allow the patient to advance from a state of catatonia and unreality to 'a heightened reality in vision and, finally, in mystical experience'.‡

Huxley introduced Leary to Humphrey Osmond. Having used mescaline and LSD in psychotherapy for alcoholics at Saskatchewan University hospital, Weyburn, Osmond believed that, 'properly used, LSD therapy can turn a large number of alcoholics into sober members of society'. In a research project at Princeton Neuro-Psychiatric Institute, Osmond discovered a structural similarity between mescaline and adrenaline molecules, which suggested that an

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* Marks, ps. 120-121

† As quoted in the BBC documentary, *The Beyond Within: The Rise and Fall of LSD* (1987)

‡ Aldous Huxley, *Heaven and Hell*, p.84, http://www.ignaciodarnaude.com/espiritualismo/Huxley,Aldous,Heaven%20and%20Hell.pdf

excess of adrenolutin in schizophrenics could be balanced with LSD or mescaline. This would mean that schizophrenia, as a form of bio-chemical self-intoxication, could be treated with a bio-chemical cure. According to Martin Lee and Bruce Shlain's book, *Acid Dreams: The Complete Social History of LSD, the CIA, the Sixties and Beyond*,

> 'Osmond's research attracted widespread attention within scientific circles. The CIA, ever intent on knowing the latest facts as early as possible, quickly sent informants to find out what was happening at Weyburn hospital. Unbeknownst to Osmond and his cohorts, throughout the next decades they were contacted on repeated occasions by Agency personnel. Indeed it was impossible for an LSD researcher not to rub shoulders with the espionage establishment, for the CIA was monitoring the entire scene'.*

Psychiatrist Sidney Cohen detected three distinct phases of the history of civilian LSD use through the 1950s. In the first phase psychiatrists saw LSD as a psychosis-inducing tool for unlocking the patient's unconscious. In the second phase, analysts argued about whether the secrets unlocked were Jungian archetypes or Freudian neuroses; and Aldous Huxley and Gerald Heard investigated the implications of the LSD-experience for developing an enlightened consciousness, conducive to creativity. Cohen's own research had shown him that the 'scientific' model of LSD as a psychosis inducer was wrong. But Cohen didn't push for lifting restrictions on experimental research. He was more concerned that a dangerous third phase was in the making, which involved LSD as a drug for pleasure seekers in a mass counterculture.†

'Captain Trips' – Alfred Hubbard

In 1963, during the days of the Harvard Psychedelic Project, Alfred Hubbard, also known as 'Captain Trips' and the 'Johnny Appleseed of LSD', showed up on the doorstep of Timothy Leary. Hubbard

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* Lee and Shlain, p.45.

† J Stevens, *Storming Heaven*, p.231; Steven J Novak, 'LSD before Leary. Sidney Cohen's critique of 1950s psychedelic drug research,' *Isis, Vol.88*, 1997.

wearing a paramilitary uniform with a holstered Colt.45, came with a sample of Sandoz LSD he wanted to swap for some of Leary's Sandoz-made psilocybin pills. 'The thing that impressed me,' Leary remembered, 'is on one hand he looked like a carpetbagger con man, and on the other he had these most-impressive people in the world on his lap, basically backing him'.*

Alfred M Hubbard (1901-1982) turned on a lot of the American elite to acid during the 1950s. At the same time, as a Roman Catholic conservative, he wanted LSD kept out of the hands of the rebellious counter-culture. Lee and Shlain, in *Acid Dreams*, describe Alfred Hubbard as a 'legendary superspy'. But Tim Scully's research on Hubbard, which I rely on extensively in this section, suggests that he was 'an opportunist, a con artist and a trickster'.†

Hubbard, as a young man, knew the importance of creating publicity to make his scams look genuine. Around 1920, Hubbard claimed he could produce electricity from radium and got a Seattle newspaper to 'report' that his 'Energy Transformer' had powered a ferry-sized vessel around Seattle's Portico Bay nonstop for three days. Hubbard then sold the Radium Corporation of Pittsburgh fifty percent of the patent rights for $75,000.

After Prohibition came into force in 1920, Hubbard worked with a bootlegging operation in the Seattle area, run by Roy Olmstead. When, in 1925, Olmstead and his associates were indicted, Hubbard turned snitch in return for immunity and appointment as a Federal prohibition agent. In this new job Hubbard came to a lucrative arrangement with his bootlegger contacts: they would hand him thousands of dollars for the purpose of bribing prohibition agents; and he would then hand in some of the money to anti-prohibition agent, William Whitney, 'for show' and pocket the rest. But whenever Whitney organised a raid, acting on Hubbard's intelligence, the agents would find the bootleggers had taken flight in the nick of time.

In 1930, the Anti-Saloon League denounced Hubbard as a corrupt federal prohibition agent and he was sacked by the Seattle

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* Todd Brendan Fahey, 'The Original Captain Trips - Who Was "Captain" Al Hubbard?', *High Times*, November 1991.

† Tim Scully, 'Alfred Matthew Hubbard AKA Dr. Alfred M. Hubbard: "The Johnny Appleseed of LSD"' (Unpublished paper. Copyright 2006-2017).

Prohibition Office ‘with prejudice’. Post-Prohibition, in March, 1935 Al Hubbard was charged with conspiracy to smuggle liquor into California. Again he tried to beat the rap by snitching, but in September 1936 he was sentenced in to 2 years imprisonment at McNeil Island.

Hubbard later claimed that after his release from prison he served as a ‘high level’ OSS agent during the 18-month period preceding the United States’ entrance into World War Two in December 1941. His story was that he smuggled war materials for the British through a Vancouver trading company run by the Canadian foreign office. He also claimed that for this service President Truman issued him with a special pardon of his pre-war smuggling offences. This cannot be true because — as recorded in his FBI file – Hubbard made a pardon application for the same offences in 1966. And in fact there is no substantive evidence that he was ever an OSS agent.

After the War, Hubbard bought a 34 acre island off the east coast of Vancouver and a 300 ton boat. Renewing his old interest, he formed the Radium Chemical Company Ltd. In 1948 the FBI investigated Hubbard’s research with radioactive materials, and dismissed him as an ‘amateur physicist’.

In 1951 Al Hubbard took LSD for the first time. He later said that the drug was supplied by the British doctor, Ronald Sandison. But in an interview with Andy Roberts in 2007, Sandison said he couldn’t have given LSD to anyone in 1951 because he only first came across it in September 1952, when he was visiting mental hospitals and the Sandoz labs in Switzerland. In fact, Sandison denied ever meeting Hubbard. In 1953, Hubbard did meet Humphrey Osmond, another British doctor with a deep interest in LSD. Osmond recalled that Hubbard was a ‘powerfully-built man...with a broad face and a firm hand-grip. He was also very genial, an excellent host’.

In 1954, Hubbard was awarded a diploma for a correspondence course he did with the Taylor University of Biocycle Dynamic Sciences. The diploma, as far as Hubbard was concerned, made him a ‘Doctor of Philosophy in Biocycle Dynamic Education’. He used his association with Osmond to describe himself as self-employed with the Division of Psychiatric Research, University of Saskatchewan.

Hubbard's new bogus credentials and his connections with influential people gave him the front to approach Sandoz for a supply of LSD. In May 1955, Sandoz sent 43 boxes of LSD-25 ampoules to Hubbard in Canada. That same year, Hubbard tripped out Aldous Huxley and the English philosopher Gerald Heard. In 1957, Hubbard, having put his radium dreams behind him, managed to become a licensed importer for Sandoz LSD into Canada. For the next few years, Hubbard, together with doctors Humphrey Osmond and Abram Hoffer, pioneered a psychedelic recovery regimen for alcoholics at Hollywood Hospital, B.C. which claimed a high success rate of between 60 and 70 per cent.

In 1956, Myron Stolaroff, then an engineer at Ampex, attended a lecture by Gerald Heard on the effects of mind-altering drugs and asked him afterwards how he could try these substances. Heard directed him to Hubbard in Vancouver. Stolaroff went there and took LSD under Hubbard's supervision. In 1961, Stolaroff set up the International Foundation for Advanced Study (IFAS) at Menlo Park, California. Stolaroff paid Hubbard a total of about $50,000 over a three-year period for research work into LSD.

In 1963 Stolaroff and Hubbard worked with the FDA to entrap scientists Bernard Roseman and Bernard Copley, the first underground chemists to manufacture and distribute bulk LSD (62,000 doses in all). Roseman and Copley, charged with smuggling LSD and pedalling it across state lines, made the mistake of falsely claiming they had imported their LSD from Israel, which was illegal. In fact, since 1960, they had been producing their LSD at a lab in Los Angeles**.** They had lied about Israel to get round the Federal Food and Drug Act's stipulations for selling restricted drugs. Roseman and Copley each got 17-year prison sentences for smuggling and pedalling LSD.

Hubbard, a traditional arch-conservative, had no time for the burgeoning Beatnik counter-culture. He was interested in Leary's experiments at Harvard, but increasingly came to loath Leary for his mission to turn on the masses to LSD. Hubbard was a practicing Roman Catholic and managed to turn on some of the church's leading clerics. He even claimed he knew the current Pope. In December 1957, the Reverend E. J. Brown of the Cathedral of the Holy Rosary in Vancouver issued an 'Introduction to the LSD Experience'. In San

Francisco in 1966 Alfred ‘Captain Trips’ Hubbard walked into an Acid Test. John Gittinger, psychologist for the CIA, recalled the incident:

> ‘Once, after these LSD parties became more commonplace, Hubbard and some doctor, I can’t remember his name, tried to attend one event. It was crazy from the start. These two bald-headed, portly guys in dark suits walking into all this madness. You can imagine that the paranoia count went through the roof as they tried to mingle with the crowd and people began melting away from them. I don’t think they were there for ten minutes before they headed for the door. At least when we went to these things we made an effort to blend in...’

Gittinger, who was himself at the centre of MK-Ultra, viewed the new LSD-fuelled counter-culture of the 1960s with uncomprehending dismay, describing it as an ‘oddball mix of music, merriment, and bizarre behaviour’.*

Lee and Shlain’s *Acid Dreams* highlights the effect of the acid produced by underground labs as it first hit the campuses and bohemian communities in 1965: ‘LSD accentuated a spirit of rebellion and helped to catalyze the expectations of many onto greatly expanded vistas'. This rebellion ‘reached to the heights of ego-dissolving delirium’. CIA-connected think tanks took a deep interest in the burgeoning acid-fuelled counterculture. The Rand Corporation, which developed strategies for counter-revolution and pacification in Vietnam, expanded its remit to include domestic dissidents. In particular Rand studied how LSD use might affect ‘changes in dogmatism’ and ‘cure’ commitment to revolutionary politics: 'If some of the subjects are drawn from extreme right or left-wing organizations, it may be possible to obtain additional behavioural measure in terms of the number resigning or becoming inactive'. Another think tank, the Hudson Institute, studied the psychedelic movement itself. The institute’s founder, Herman Kahn, participated in numerous tripping sessions with Timothy Leary’s associates, but according to one of the institute’s consultants on LSD, Kahn ‘was

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* Albarelli, p.292.

primarily interested in social control'. Kahn wrote a futurist manifesto, entitled *The Year 2000*, which interestingly predicted the emergence of two nations within the USA, one of which would be 'dropped-out'.

The potential for acid-inspired innovation was mooted by another 'futurist', Willis Harmon, who worked at the Stanford Research Institute (SRI) in Palo Alto researching chemical incapacitants for the US Army. Harmon studied LSD's therapeutic and problem-solving potential under the auspices of the International Federation of Advanced Studies (IFAS).* But this kind of research was something the government and its scientific and medical advisers were intent on shutting down. The Drug Abuse Control Amendments bill of 1965 allowed LSD to be designated as a controlled substance, requiring licensing for sales and distribution, although possession for personal consumption was specifically allowed. The law went into effect on February 1, 1966.

The new law not only clamped down on non-medical use of psychedelic drugs; it also had the effect of ending medical research into the drugs. The law stated that no person shall manufacture, compound, process or sell any drugs with a 'hallucinogenic effect'. The responsibility of enforcing the law wasn't given to the Federal Bureau of Narcotics (FBN), but to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW), who in turn delegated enforcement to the Federal Drugs Authority (FDA). The FDA demanded that almost all LSD researchers stop their studies and return any supplies of LSD. Myron Stolaroff bemoaned the forced closure of over 50 research projects into psychedelic drugs, including many approved by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). With the new law in force, the Swiss pharmaceutical company, Sandoz, stopped distributing LSD for research in the United States in April 1966.†

Researchers were required to turn in their supplies of LSD to the FDA. The adverse publicity that fuelled the crackdown forced

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* Martin Lee and Bruce Shlain, p.39. Acid Dreams: The Complete Social History of LSD, the CIA, the Sixties and Beyond, ps. 197-99

† Rick Doblin, 'The Evolution of the Regulation of the Medical Uses of Psychedelic Drugs and Marijuana,' ps.40-41 maps.org/research-archive/dissertation/chapter1.pdf

Stolaroff's International Foundation for Advanced Study to close down in late 1965. Willis Harmon however, was able to get round some of the new restrictions by simply repositioning his IFAS research at the Educational Policy Research Center at Stanford, of which he was director. Harmon brought Alfred Hubbard out of retirement to join his Stanford project as a special investigative agent. In a letter to Hubbard, Harmon stated,

> 'Our investigations of some of the current social movements affecting education indicate that the drug usage prevalent among student members of the New Left is not entirely undesigned. Some of it appears to be present as a deliberate weapon aimed at political change. We are concerned with assessing the significance of this as it impacts on matters of long-range educational policy. In this connection it would be advantageous to have you considered in the capacity of a special investigative agent who might have access to relevant data which not ordinarily available'.*

Hubbard supplied the Food and Drugs Administration with intelligence on illicit LSD production labs, but his hostility to hippie chemists stemmed from his belief that his beloved LSD was not for the masses and that it should be 'pure' and made available only for a chosen few. According to Stolaroff, 'Al's dream was to open up a worldwide chain of clinics as training grounds for other LSD researchers'.†

In the spring of 1962 Leary met Mary Pinchot, who sought him out because she wanted advice on how to run an LSD session. Leary didn't know it at the time, but Mary was the former wife of Cord Meyer, a senior CIA officer who oversaw world-wide operation to infiltrate international student organisations and promote various cultural foundations and journals as CIA fronts (details of the operation would be leaked and published in *Ramparts* magazine in 1967). Assuming that Leary's account is reliable – he was

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* Lee and Shlain, ps.196-9.

† Fahey, op. cit.

undoubtedly a good story-teller with a tendency to re-remember his experiences for good effect – Mary Pinchot told Leary:

> 'Since drug research is of vital importance to the intelligence agencies of this country, you'll be allowed to go on with your experiments as long as you keep it quiet. You are doing exploratory work the CIA tried to do in the 1950s. So they are more than happy to have you do your research for them. As long as it doesn't get out of hand... You're involved in the big game here. Mind change is the key to power. They'll deal with you the same way the Soviets would handle a nuclear physicist with liberal libertarian ideals. They'll indulge your utopian fantasies. They know that creative scientists tend to be free-thinkers. They'll run you with a loose silken cord as long as you don't stir up the masses'.

In October 1964, Mary Pinchot was shot to death in Georgetown on the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal towpath. The killer was never identified.*

Coasts of Utopias

Against the advice of Frank Barron, Aldous Huxley and others, Leary and Richard Alpert set up a psychedelic research and lobbying group: the International Federation for Internal Freedom – later renamed the League for Spiritual Discovery (LSD). Going on leave from Harvard, they went off to Zihuatenejo in Mexico on tourist visas. With this base in a semi-tropical paradise, Leary and Alpert were soon inundated with enquiries and impromptu visits from psychedelic pilgrims. In May 1963 Alpert was sacked by the Harvard authorities for giving psilocybin to a student (which he didn't deny) and Leary was sacked for non-attendance (he claimed he was on leave). The Zihuatenejo adventure was cut short when the Mexican government expelled Leary for 'engaging in activities not permitted to a tourist'.†

Back home in the USA, a new centre for Spiritual Discovery was provided by William Mellon Hitchcock, a young stockbroker on

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* Leary, *Flashbacks*, p.387.

† Marks op cit. p.23-4.

Wall Street for Lehman Brothers. Hitchcock was the grandson of the William Larimer Mellon, the founder of Gulf Oil, and the nephew of Richard and Andrew Mellon, the Pittsburgh financiers. In July 1963, Billy Hitchcock and his brother Tommy, as owners of the Hitchcock Cattle Corporation, bought a 2000 acre estate, near Poughkeepsie, New York State.* Although Millbrook did have a few cattle, they were there as a tax dodge; and the buildings on the estate were far more opulent than one would find on a ranch. Straightaway, Billy rented the main house at Millbrook to Tim Leary and his associates at a nominal rate. At this secluded setting for tripping and spiritual discovery, Leary named his enterprise the Castalia Foundation, the fictional spiritual sect in Herman Hesse's *The Glass Bead Game*, with himself playing the part of Grandmaster Joseph Knecht. The pilgrims in search of the psychedelic experience were prepared to pay for it and turned up in increasingly large numbers.

A CIA Office of Security memorandum from November 1963 (obtained by John Marks under a Freedom of Information suit in 1977), instructs staff to report drug-taking amongst CIA assets engaged in classified research and experimentation, and in groups using hallucinogens in 'religious experimentation'. The memo also instructs Agency personnel 'involved' with Leary, Alpert and the International Federation for Internal Freedom to report on their activities:

> '[CIA Office of Security] has not been able to determine whether any staff employees of the Agency have engaged in the unauthorized taking of any of these drugs, but there is information that some non-agency groups, particularly on the West Coast, have taken these drugs in a type of religious experimentation... some individuals known to have taken the drugs have sensitive security clearances and are engaged in classified work. Any information concerning the use of this type of drug for experimental or personal reasons should be reported immediately to Chief/SRS/OS with all specific details furnished. In addition, any information of Agency personnel involved

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* *Millbrook Round Table* (newspaper), August 1, 1963.

> with the International Federation for Internal Freedom, or with Drs. ALPERT or LEARY, or with any group engaging in this type of activity should also be reported'.*

While the CIA discreetly monitored Leary's International Federation for Internal Freedom, other agencies were intent on taking it down. As the Millbrook enterprise drew more and more publicity it attracted the interest of the local police vice squad and the FBI. In April 1966, the local assistant district attorney and future Watergate burglar, Gordon Liddy, led a night time raid on the estate. By early 1968, the Millbrook house had been subjected to repeated busts, as well as an indictment filed against the Hitchcock Cattle Corporation for permitting a nuisance to take place on its property. Also, by this time rows were breaking out between various spiritual factions. Billy reluctantly asked Leary and his friends to move on.

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* Quoted in Walter Bowart, 'Lords of the Revolution: Timothy Leary and the CIA orThe Spy Who Came In From the (Ergot) Mold' http://www.whale.to/b/bowart8.html

3 - London Underground

> ‘You don’t hear about it anymore, but people are still visiting the cosmos. We must always remember to thank the CIA and the army for LSD. That’s what people forget... They invented LSD to control people and what they did was give us freedom. Sometimes it works in wondrous ways its wonders to perform’.
>
> John Lennon, 1980

Centre of the World

Michael Hollingshead, the Englishman who introduced Timothy Leary to LSD during the days of the Harvard psychedelics project, was one of the most imposing personalities at the Millbrook centre. His later autobiography was modestly entitled, *The Man Who Turned On the World*. In the Millbrook tripping sessions Hollingshead had been using the great works of Eastern mysticism - such as *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* and *The I Ching* - as basic manuals of instruction for LSD sessions. But Millbrook had supplemented the knowledge of the ancients with ‘the modern technological means of transmitting aesthetic phenomena’, i.e. the toys and tools of the new electronic media. In 1965 Leary sent him on a mission to his native land. Hollingshead flew into London with 5000 trips of LSD and a list of things to do. Firstly, Hollingshead was to rent the Albert Hall for a psychedelic jamboree with big-name rock bands and poets; and with Leary himself hosting the event in his role as the High Priest of LSD. This plan never came off, because of Leary's bust for marijuana possession in the US at the end of 1965.

Another part of the mission involved setting up a centre for running LSD sessions and promoting psychedelia in the arts. Hollingshead, with help from old-Etonians, Desmond O'Brien and Joey Mellen, turned a Belgravia flat into the ‘World Psychedelic Centre’. For their LSD sessions, they used the new Leary/Alpert/Metzner book, *The Psychedelic Experience: A Manual Based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead,* as a guide. Hollingshead thought ‘that London would indeed become the centre for a world

psychedelic movement'.* The World Psychedelic Centre soon drew in a colourful cast of devotees: *Playboy* boss, Victor Lownes; painter, Felix Topolski; film director, Roman Polanski; Tate Gallery director, Sir Roland Penrose; writers such as William Burroughs and Alex Trocchi; pop stars including Donovan and Paul McCartney; and hundreds more of the jet-set intelligentsia. According to Hollingshead, the World Psychedelic Centre clientèle

> 'represented perhaps the seminal non-conformism of England's mid-sixties intelligentsia - not the evangelical non-conformism of such as the Millbrook sect, but an intellectualized form of psychedelic enlightenment, of which popularised Learyism was largely a culmination - that freed so many of England's educated people from the rigidity of social and class and cultural patterns which had outwardly been solidifying into right-wing Toryism. Their rebellion was typical of this period; the Establishment was the enemy...'†

For several months, Hollingshead's World Psychedelic Centre team spread a lot of acid around London. The secret however, couldn't last; and it didn't. In March 1966, a half-page advertisement for *London Life* magazine appeared in the London *Evening Standard*:

> 'LSD - THE DRUG THAT COULD THREATEN LONDON: Just for kicks, some famous artists, pop stars, and debs are 'taking a trip' on LSD - one of the most powerful and dangerous drugs known to man. It produces hallucinations. It can cause temporary insanity. Kicks like this may be bought at the appalling cost of psychotic illness or even suicide. It is banned in America and elsewhere - but is still available in London, quite legally. Still more appalling - just half an ounce of LSD could knock out London. Socially, the stuff is dynamite. *London Life* magazine has investigated LSD fully and has uncovered a social peril of magnitude which it believes

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* Michael Hollingshead, *The Man Who Turned On the World,* Chapter 6. www.psychedelic-library.org/hollings.htm

† Ibid.

> demands immediate legislation to stop the spread of a cult which could bring mental lethargy and chaos. *London Life* reporters have also traced the man who calls himself Mr. LSD. He has given them an astonishing series of interviews. Read all about him, and about LSD, in this week's *London Life'*.

'Mr. LSD' was World Psychedelic Centre president, Desmond O'Brien. The story had been leaked to *London Life* by his friend and fellow-tripper, the writer, Hugh Blackwell. He had blurted it out in the presence of the reporter while he was 'out of it'. A few weeks later the *Sunday People* jumped in with:

> 'THE MEN BEHIND LSD—THE DRUG THAT IS MENACING YOUNG LIVES.... The drug is LSD-25 - Lysergic Acid Diethylamide. It is by far the most dangerous drug ever to become easily obtainable on the black market... In the wrong hands, the hallucinations it produces can lead to utter irresponsibility, disregard for personal safety and suicidal tendencies. IT IS, IN FACT, A KILLER DRUG. We have obtained evidence of "LSD parties" being held in London. We have discovered an alarming group of people who are openly and blatantly spreading the irresponsible use of this terrible drug. These men run what they call the Psychedelic Centre... Amongst the Centre's activities is the publication of a handbook called "Psychedelic Manual"... a treatise on drug-induced hallucinations and other "benefits"... These include: "For personal power - for fun - for sensuous enjoyment." The manual ... says the taking of LSD and similar drugs offers "a release from our conditionings" and "senses become more acute." Recommending group sessions of drug-taking, the writer says "A person should approach the experience with love and trust in the company of those he trusts." A psychedelic experience lasts normally from eight to sixteen hours - but the results may last from several days to several months. "The voyager should set aside at least two days for the experience itself." This is irresponsible, dangerous gibberish. The Centre was deserted and in a state of considerable chaos when our

> investigators gained entry on Thursday. There were used hypodermic syringes, empty drug ampoules and a variety of pills. Among the litter of papers were dozens of phone numbers, some of them of well-known show-business stars and personalities'.

Hollingshead had somehow got lost on his spiritual mission: the 'used hypodermic syringes' and 'empty drug ampoules' referred to in the *People* story were his; he had gotten himself hooked on methydrine. In the meantime, while half the youth of Britain were now wondering how to score their first LSD trip, the elders in the corridors of power were asking how soon the drug could be banned. It soon was.

One of the reasons Michael Hollingshead gave for coming to London in 1965 was the tendency of the London acid heads – such as those around Alex Trocchi — to politicise, rather than spiritualise, the psychedelic experience. As he put it in *The Man Who Turned On the World*:

> 'From what I had heard in letters and conversations, the psychedelic movement in England was small and badly informed. It appeared that those who took LSD did so as a consciously defiant anti-authoritarian gesture. The spiritual content of the psychedelic experience was being overlooked'.*

Psychedelic Situationists

Hollingshead had been sending shipments of LSD to Alexander Trocchi, who distributed it to his contacts in what was to become the London cultural 'Underground'. Trocchi, born in Glasgow in 1925, had moved to Paris in 1952, where he edited *Merlin*, an English-language literary magazine. In its pages, *Merlin* featured contributions from avant-guard writers such as Jean Genet, Eugene Ionesco and Samuel Becket — who, at the time, were unable to get their work published anywhere else in English. Trocchi himself, surrounded by young expatriate American writers, such as Terry Southern and

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* Ibid.

George Plimpton, was, in the words of Greil Marcus, 'seen as a man of towering literary genius, fated to cut a swath through the world'.*

In Paris, Trocchi joined the *Lettrist International*, led by Guy Debord. In 1957, the Lettrists, some former-Surrealists and others from several countries came together at a meeting in Italy to found the *Situationist International*. One of the central Situationist concepts was 'psychogeography': defined as the 'study of the specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organised or not, on the emotions and behaviour of individuals'. In the 'experimental mode', they employed the *derive*: the basic idea of which was that individuals or groups would 'drift' through the city and lose themselves; their customary rationales for movement (work, relationships and leisure) would be abandoned in order to 'succumb to the enticements of the terrain and the encounters associated with it'.† One of the inspirations for such adventures was a passage in Thomas De Quincey's 1821 book, *Confessions of an Opium Eater*:

> 'I used often, after I had taken opium, to wander forth...[to] parts of London, in which the poor resort to on a Saturday night... an opium eater is too happy to observe the motion of time. And sometimes in my attempts to steer homewards, upon nautical principles, by fixing my eye on the pole-star, and seeking ambitiously for a *north-west passage*... I came suddenly upon such knotty contradictions of alleys, such enigmatical entires, and such sphinx's riddles of streets without thoroughfares... I could almost have believed, at times, that I must be the first discoverer of some of the *terre incognito* and doubted whether they had yet been laid down in the modern charts of London'.‡

The theory of the *Derive*, according to Debord, rested on the belief that future developments would bring about an 'irreversible change in the behaviour and the decor of present-day society'. The Situationist concept of 'unitary urbanism' expressed a vision of city planning

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* Greil Marcus, Preface to Alexander Trocchi, *Cains Book*.

† Guy Debord, "Theory of The Dérive," *International Situationist, No. 2* (1958), *S.I. Anthology*, p. 23,pp.50-4.

‡ Thomas De Quincey, *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*, p.27.

based on aesthetic and technological innovations in architecture, but freed from subordination to the needs of corporate developers and the endless expansion of private car ownership. Given the ravages of homogenised planning in the urban environments of the twenty-first century, with city centres given over to big business and tourism, functionalist architecture, and streets polluted by the noise and fumes of automobile traffic, it is difficult now to re-imagine the experience of the dérive in the Paris of the early 1950s. Ivan Chtcheglov, the young Situationist seer, could still write of a future in which city dwellers would reclaim the streets: 'We will construct cities for drifting... but with light retouching, one can utilize certain zones which already exist. One can utilize certain persons who already exist'.*

Trocchi enjoyed the *dérive* with Guy Debord:

> 'I remember long, wonderful psycho-geographical walks in London with Guy. He took me to places in London I didn't know, that he sensed, that I'd never have been to if it hadn't been with him. He was a man who could discover a city... [Debord had] a magical quality... Distances didn't seem to matter to the man. Walking in London, in the daytime, at night, he'd bring me to a spot he'd found, and the place would begin to live. Some old forgotten part of London. Then he'd reach back for a story, for a piece of history, as if he'd been there. He'd quote from Marx, or *Treasure Island*, or De Quincey'.†

Trocchi's first novel, *Young Adam*, published in Paris in 1954, is a bleak existentialist parable about how a young anti-hero, caught up in a murder-hunt, grapples with the meaning of responsibility in a mean world. Set on a coal-barge on a Scottish canal, the narrator charts his 'voyage' towards an irrevocable break with the deadening world of the work ethic, blind justice and bourgeois marriage.

Trocchi began using heroin in the mid-fifties and would addicted for the rest of his life (he died in 1984). In Paris, Trocchi financed his heroin habit by turning out porn stories for Olympia Press

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* Debord, ibid.

† G Marcus, *Lipstick Traces*, p.388.

under the name 'Frances Lengel'. In 1956, he moved to New York and wrote his second novel, *Cain's Book*. This is another barge novel, which describes his time living on a scow, hauling cargoes of rubble along the Hudson, and shooting heroin in the back streets of Manhattan. The inner-voyage here is Trocchi's wilful abandonment of his own status and vocation in the artistic-literary world. But rather than a case of biting the hand that was feeding him, *Cain's Book* is an act of artistic self-destruction, with the narrator declaring himself as, 'a decadent at a tremendous turning point in history, constitutionally incapable of turning with it as a writer, I am living my personal Dada.... The steel of logic has daily to be strengthened to contain the volcanic element within. It grows daily more hard to contain. I am a kind of bomb'.

Trocchi had originally titled *Cain's Book* as *The Making of a Monster*. Trocchi's 'personal Dada' was his projection of Guy Debord's ideas on subversion as a 'game' of 'constructed situations,' played in deadly seriousness, and whose rules were constantly shifting. In the context of 'the necessity of creating situations', the junkie fix was, in Trocchi's mind, 'a purposive spoon in the broth of experience'. Trocchi's heroin habit became a serious problem for him. Charged with supplying heroin to a minor in New York in 1961, he faced the near certain prospect of years of imprisonment. The Situationist International in Paris defended their wayward member, with a statement by Guy Debord, Jaqueline de Jong and Asger Jorn entitled *Hands off Alexander Trocchi!*:

> 'Alexander Trocchi, whose case is due to be tried in October, is in effect accused of having experimented with drugs. Quite apart from any attitude on the use of drugs and its repression on the scale of society... a very great many doctors, psychologists and also artists have studied the effects of drugs without anyone thinking of imprisoning them... Indeed, we consider that the British intellectuals and artists should be the first to join with us in denouncing this menacing lack of culture on the part of the American police, and to demand the liberation and immediate repatriation of Alexander Trocchi... We ask

everyone of good faith whom this appeal reaches, to sign it, and make it known as widely as possible.'*

Trocchi however, was not relying on a political campaign for his freedom. As soon as he could get bail, he fled to Canada and then to Britain by boat, 'cold-turkeying' all the way. By this time Trocchi, in his own search for the 'north-west passage', had discovered a new beacon on the voyage: LSD. He had been introduced to it in California by Dr Oscar Janiger, a leading expert in the psychology of creativity, who had been tripping-out Hollywood film people, such as Cary Grant. Janiger had obtained the LSD from the British philosopher Gerald Heard, who had himself obtained it from Alfred Hubbard. Janiger explained 'Gerald Heard... told me the emergence of LSD in the twentieth century was simply God's way of giving us the gift on consciousness. He believed that LSD was a device for saving humanity from Armageddon'.†

Coming after his bleak experiences in New York, Trocchi's psychedelic experiences seemed to give him a new optimism and enthusiasm for re-engagement with the world of culture and politics — even though he never let up on his heroin intake. Trocchi arrived back in Britain at a time when the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the Committee of One Hundred were making a big impact. By this time Trocchi's novel, *Cain's Book*, had made him notorious. At the 1962 Edinburgh Writer's Conference in 1962 — where he coined the phrase 'astronauts of inner space' — he was denounced by the pillars of the Scottish literary establishment, including the Stalinist-nationalist poet, Hugh MacDiarmid, who called him 'cosmopolitan scum'. The legal authorities in Britain likewise disapproved: some local councils banned and burned his books under the obscenity laws.

In London, Trocchi launched a new project named *Sigma*. This aimed to build 'a new decentralised organisation of writers, painters, sculptors, musicians, dancers, physicists, bio-chemists, philosophers, neurologists, engineers, and whatnots, of every race and nationality'.

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* Guy Debord, Jacqueline de Jong and Asger Jorn – 'Hands Off Alexander Trocchi!', *Situationist International*, October 1960.

† Leary, *Flashbacks*, p.132.

To co-ordinate a ‘catalogue of such a reservoir of talent, intelligence and power’ would be ‘of itself a spur to our imagination’. For London he planned to found a ‘living-gallery-workshop-auditorium-happening situation where conferences and encounters are to be undertaken... It will be our window on the metropolis, a sigma-centre... an experimental situation in which what is happening cannot be described in terms of conventional categories (which it transcends)...’*

Trocchi argued that ‘Certain hallucinatory properties of drugs make them central and urgently relevant to any imaginable enquiry into the mystery of the human mind. Unfortunately, ignorance, hysteria and sensationalism have contributed to making this largely a police matter’. Trocchi believed that RD Laing's ideas on the usefulness of LSD in treating schizophrenia were ‘entirely in line with those proposed by Sigma’. Trocchi planned to produce a book titled 'Drugs of the Mind' with Laing and Willam Burroughs but, like so many of Trocchi's projects, it was never carried through. In 1965, Trocchi did however pull off an event which gave birth to the term, ‘Underground’. On June 5, 1965, several thousand people attended an international poetry reading he organised at the Albert Hall, called *Wholly Communion*. Next, along with experimental artist, Jeff Nuttall, Trocchi initiated the Art Laboratory, which put on multi-media and performance art in an old warehouse in Drury Lane.† When the 1967 British ‘Summer of Love’ kicked off at the *Technicolour Dream* gig in Alexandra Palace with the Pink Floyd, it was Trocchi who warmed up the audience with his poetry.

The Situationists in Paris by this time considered Trocchi’s alliances to be politically dubious, so they expelled him. According to Trocchi:

> ‘Guy [Debord] wouldn’t even mention the people I was involved with – Timothy Leary, Ronnie Laing. I remember the last letter he sent me: “Your name sticks in

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* *Sigma Portfolio No. 5*, 1964. Reprinted in *A Life in Pieces – Reflections on Alexander Trocchi*. Eds A Campbell and T Niel. Rebel Inc. 1999.

† Jonathan Green, *All Dressed Up – The Sixties and the Counter-culture,* ps.128-47.

> the minds of good men." He was like Lenin; an absolutist, constantly kicking people out...'*

In London in 1967, Charles Radcliffe, a Situationist supporter who later formed a hash-smuggling syndicate with Howard Marks, co-authored a cultural/political manifesto with three English members of the Situationist International: Timothy Clark, Chris Gray and Donald Nicholson-Smith. The manifesto highlighted the Dadaists and Surrealists of the inter-war period as their forerunners; as engaged in 'a revolutionary avant-garde experimenting with a new life-style, drawing on new techniques, which were simultaneously self-expressive and socially disruptive. Art was a series of free experiments in the construction of a new libertarian order'. The Situationists however, went even further than their revolutionary predecessors:

> 'Our wildest fantasies are the richest elements of our reality. They must be given real, not abstract powers. Dynamite, feudal castles, jungles, liquor, helicopters, laboratories... everything and more must pass into their service'.†

When the Toronto Expo-67 festival exhibited cybernetic and televisual technology which pointed the way towards virtual reality computer games, the English Situationists commented:

> 'Still more sinister is the combination of total kinetic environments and a stiff dose of acid. "We try to vaporise the mind," says a psychedelic artist, "by bombing the senses" ... To date Leary is the only person to have attempted to pull all this together. Having reduced everyone to a state of hyper-impressionable plasticity, he incorporated a backwoods myth of the modern-scientific-truth-underlying-all-world-religions, a cretin's catechism broadcast persuasively at the same time as it was expressed by the integral manipulation of sense data... a

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* Marcus, *Lipstick Traces*, p.387; *Situationist Anthology*, p.204-212.

† Chris Gray, TJ Clarke, Donald Nicholson-Smith, *The Revolution of Modern Art and the Modern Art of Revolution.*

> crass manipulation of subjective experience accepted ecstatically as a mystical revelation'.

They did, however, take Leary seriously, carefully adding that, 'Leary's personal vulgarity should not blind anyone to the possibilities implicit in this'. 'The urban guerrilla' (using the term somewhat metaphorically) would 'have to be inventive. We must learn to subvert existing cities, to grasp all the possible and the least expected uses of time and space they contain. Conditioning must be reversed'.

The 1967 'Summer of Love'

In 1967 there was an explosion of LSD consumption in Britain. A good deal of the LSD was produced by Victor James Kapur, proprietor of a pharmacy in New North Road, Hackney, east London. Kapur and his distributors were not part of the emerging hippie subculture; and seem to have had no motivation beyond profit. Bernadette Whybro, a Notting Hill prostitute, handled domestic distribution; antiques dealer Harry Nathan was in charge of exports to the USA – which accounted for most of the acid Kapur produced. Kapur had two labs for making LSD: one in his shop, and another in a rented garage. Kapur's operation lacked the chromatographic technique necessary to chrystalise the acid. Dealers who bought the drug in its powdered form turned it into tablets or dissolved it so it could be dropped onto blotters. Kapur's operation had begun in September 1966, when he first purchased a large batch of the starting base, ergotoxine. Kapur bought his ingredients from a British chemicals company, and had them delivered to him in West Germany.

Kapur may have made as much as a kilo of LSD before police busted his operation in November 1967. In May 1968, Kapur was sentenced to nine years imprisonment. Nathan got seven years. Whybro got off lightly with two years probation, leading to speculation that she had been an informer. The police squad that busted the Kapur operation was riddled with corruption. Detective Sergeant 'Nobby' Pilcher became notorious for raids on rock stars, in which drugs were planted when they couldn't be found. The 'Semolina Pilchard' in the Beatles' song 'I Am the Walrus' apparently refers to Pilcher. Charged with conspiracy to pervert the course of justice – which had involved paying informers with drugs seized from suppliers

– Pilcher was convicted in September 1973 and sentenced to four years imprisonment by Judge Melford Stephenson, who told him, 'You poisoned the wells of criminal justice, and set about it deliberately'.* With the bust of Kapur's laboratory there was very little LSD production in Britain over the next two years.

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* Andy Roberts, *Albion Dreaming: A popular history of LSD in Britain*, ps. 154-56, 175-77.

4 – David Solomon and the Art of Psychedelic Subversion

Psychedelic Jazz

In late-1967 David Solomon moved to England, where he was to play a catalyst role in establishing underground LSD production. Initially however, Solomon's move across the Atlantic was motivated by his ambition to start up a business to synthesize Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC – the active ingredient of cannabis) and distribute it legally. In this scheme, Solomon had two business associates who like him had been visitors to Timothy Leary's psychedelic fun house at Millbrook. These were Paul Joseph Arnaboldi, who was soon to become famous on British television as 'Captain Bounty' in the TV chocolate ad; Gerry Lynn Thomas, a Canadian chemical engineer and drugs-smuggler, who was later to achieve infamy as an informer.*

David Solomon (1925-2007), unlike most of the psychedelic rebels he encountered in Britain in the 1960's and '70s, belonged to an older generation. Born in California, Solomon served in World War II along with his two brothers. But when both of his brothers lost their lives in bombing raids over Germany, David, as he was the only surviving son in his family, was withdrawn by the Army from front line service. Discharged in 1946, Solomon took the opportunity of a college education offered by the GI Bill. He graduated with a BA from Washington Square College, New York and took up journalism. Solomon was the quintessential Beat Generation hipster-intellectual.

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* In David Black, 'From Acid Jazz to Acid Revolution: The Psychedelic Odyssey of David Solomon', published in *Rab-Rab: Journal for Political and Formal Inquiries in Art, Issue 5*, (Helsinki), 2019, I wrote that Solomon, Arnabaldi and Thomas 'teamed up' at Millbrook. Although all three were there at one time or another, I erred in suggesting that they all met there face-to-face at a particular time.

As assistant editor at *Esquire* magazine in the mid-1950s, Solomon commissioned a provocative article by Dizzy Gillespie entitled 'Jazz is too good for Americans'. Gillespie wrote (June 1957), 'jazz has never really been accepted as an art form by the people of my own country... They believe... people hear jazz through their feet, not their their brains. To them, jazz is music for kids and dope addicts... Not serious music'.

The phrase 'Dope addicts' was no doubt chosen carefully. Heroin addiction had long been a plague amongst jazz musicians. But the American state, which was happy to pay Black musicians to tour the world and promote the 'American Way' of 'diversity' and 'creativity', took a less than tender approach towards those of them who transgressed the drug laws of the United States. During the 1940s and '50s, hundreds of America's finest jazz musicians – most of them Black — were incarcerated for drug possession at the Federal Narcotics Prison Farm, Lexington, Kentucky. They included Chet Baker, Tadd Dameron, Joe Guy, Elvin Jones, Stan Levey, Howard McGhee, Jackie McLean, Lee Morgan, Red Rodney, Sonny Rollins, Zoot Sims and Sonny Stitt. The Farm, known as 'Narco', also contained the Addiction Research Center (ARC), directed by Dr. Harris Isbell, a member of the Federal Drug Administration's Advisory Committee on Drug Abuse. Though neither Gillespie or Solomon knew it at the time, throughout the 1950s ARC conducted experiments using hundreds of drugs on inmates (or 'patients' as the ARC preferred to call them) for the Office of Naval Research and for the Geschickter Fund for Medical Research (which was later revealed to be a CIA front). In 1953 Isbell sent a number of reports to CIA Technical Services on some experiments ARC had been doing with LSD. Isbell's experiments, which included other mind-bending drugs such as Ibogaine, were reviewed by Robert Lashbrook, head of CIA technical Services and Sidney Gottlieb, CIA Chemical Division chief. None of Isbell's programs appear on the list of the CIA's MK-Ultra sub-projects; CIA funded experiments continued at Narco until 1962 under the cover of the National Institutes of Mental Health (NIMH).* According to Lee and Shlain, in *Acid Dreams*:

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* Albarelli, ps.308-317.

> ‘It became an open secret among street junkies that if the supply got tight, you could always commit yourself to Lexington, where heroin and morphine were doled out as payment if you volunteered for Isbell's wacky drug experiments... CIA documents describe experiments conducted by Isbell in which certain patients — nearly all black inmates — were given LSD for more than seventy-five consecutive days. In order to overcome tolerance to the hallucinogen, Isbell administered “double, triple and quadruple doses’’’.*

As assistant editor at *Esquire*, Solomon commissioned Aldous Huxley – whom he regarded as psychedelic ‘guru extraordinaire’ — to write up his ideas on how pharmacological innovations might facilitate a much-needed spiritual/ethical revolution. The article never did appear in *Esquire*, but Solomon did manage to get the writings of William S Burroughs (another one-time Narco inmate) mainstreamed in his next job. In 1960 Solomon left *Esquire* to take up the editorship of *Metronome*, a jazz magazine. According to Black photo-journalist Herb Snitzer, Bob Asen, the publisher of *Metronome*, ‘was hoping that Solomon would bring a more hip, Esquire-like sensibility to the magazine – more politics, culture, up-to-date issues. Solomon was hip all right... ideas spilled out of him’.†

Up until that time *Metronome* had focussed on mainstream big-band performers, such as Count Basie and Duke Ellington. Now, recalled Snitzer,

> ‘under Solomon’s leadership, we were publishing a magazine that featured something truly revolutionary: our focus was on the young black jazz performers who were transforming music in America... like trumpeters Lee Morgan and Booker Little, and this young black kid from Texas known as Ornette Coleman with his plastic white saxophone. We proselytized...’

Ralph Ellison, author of the classic Afro-American novel, *The Invisible Man*, was no great fan of ‘modern’ Jazz, beginning with Be-

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* Lee and Shlain, p.28.

† Herb Snitzer, *Glorious Days and Nights: a Jazz Memoir*, ps.31-33.

Bop. For Ellison Jazz was all about 'democracy' as he defined it. According to Fred Kaplan:

> 'The novelist Ralph Ellison called jazz an artistic counterpart to the American political system. The soloist can play anything he wants as long as he stays within the tempo and the chord changes — just as, in a democracy, the individual can say or do whatever he wants as long as he obeys the law'.*

Solomon saw that in the Jazz scene he was part of, staying 'within the tempo and the chord changes' was equivalent to imprisonment. The principle of obeying the 'law' was meaningless if you wanted to gig south of the Mason-Dixon Line.

The *Metronome* staff now saw themselves as producing a cultural, rather than just a music magazine. Snitzer recruited some of most innovative American photographers, while Solomon brought in the writers: the March 1961 edition featured articles by LeRoi Jones, Henry Miller, Lenny Bruce, Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, and Neil Cassady. Solomon published extracts from William Burroughs' novels in *Metronome,* presenting them as meditations on the horrors of heroin use. Burroughs' contributions consisted of an extract from his novel *The Soft Machine*, and the essay, 'The Time of the Assassins'. As both were written in his new non-linear, 'cut-up' style, most Metronome readers didn't 'get' them.†

Solomon's stint at *Metronome* ended in summer 1961. *Metronome* was fighting a losing circulation war with *Downbeat*, whose owners had pockets deep enough to keep their loss-making magazine going indefinitely. *Metronome* folded at the end of 1961. The last cover of the magazine featured John Coltrane and Coleman Hawkins.‡

By this time, Solomon had access to a good supply of LSD, and kept a stash of it in a safe deposit box at a Manhattan bank. As a psychedelic proselytizer he ran tripping sessions for those he thought

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* Fred Kaplan, 'When Ambassadors Had Rhythm', *New York Times*, 29 June 2008.

† Jed Birmingham, 'William Burroughs and David Solomon', RealityStudio: A William S. Burroughs Community.

‡ Jed Birmingham. Op. cit.

could benefit from it. The one documented instance of Solomon's 'method' indicates that he tripped out his subjects with careful preparation and supervision; especially with regard to 'set and setting'. The memoirs of the jazz clarinettist, Perry Robinson (1938-2018) includes a chapter on how Solomon introduced him to LSD in 1962.

Perry's blacklisted communist father, Earl Robinson, was an accomplished musician and songwriter, whose compositions included 'The Ballad of Joe Hill' (recorded by Paul Robeson) and 'The House We Live In' (recorded by Frank Sinatra and Archie Shepp). Solomon was an old friend of the Robinson family. Perry Robinson had just returned from the World Festival of Youth and Students for Peace and Friendship, a controversial event held in Helsinki in summer 1962 in which some 14,000 young people representing 137 countries or nationalities took part. Robinson had performed there with Archie Shepp and trumpeter, Bill Dixon. The festival had been controversial because it was sponsored by the Russian government. Since it was held in a neutral country, the American CIA saw it as a communist cultural offensive and secretly sponsored a large counter-festival, fronted by the Congress for Cultural Freedom. The counter-festival featured abstract paintings flown in from New York's Museum of Modern Art and a few less 'radical' jazz musicians.* Shortly after Robinson returned from Europe in 1962, Solomon said to him, '"You've got to take acid. You're ready for it, and I'm going to turn you on." Robinson was up for it. Before the tripping session, Solomon told him what to expect:

> 'All your fears and emotions and intuitions and senses are heightened to the max. It's like complete enlightenment, it's like the first day of life. But it's going to open you up like a book, and you're going to go into your personal history. The key is not to let anything that comes up get to you. The worst thing is to fight any of these feelings; just accept them no matter what they are'.

Robinson dissolved Solomon's acid-laced sugar cube in his mouth:

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* Festival 1962, M Henriksson and A E Johnston-Arthur www.checkpointhelsinki.org/en/works/festival-1962]

> ‘Then all of a sudden it was like the lights went on in a strange way. There was an oil painting of Dave’s wife that lit up in the most fascinating colours; I saw the texture and the detail and I went “out”. I started looking at the green colour of plants, and the light coming through the window. It was mystical, like the luminescences of the universe were turned on; everything was more intense, more vibrant and alive. I felt the connection between everything, the true one-ness of life. It’s like a whole other perception, you see cobweb lines of energy connecting everything, but it’s so natural. It opened my eyes to seeing things, like what Aldous Huxley wrote about in *The Doors of Perception*, how you start seeing minute objects and shapes. Things are alive, things are breathing, and it’s the true state of being. Condensed light makes physical objects, and on trips you realise that everything is light, and you see the pure undulating energy of the universe’.*

In the Be-Bop days of the 1940s many young musicians had fallen under the fatal illusion that, because great performers such as Charlie Parker performed high on heroin, shooting up before a performance would somehow propel them to the same level of virtuosity. LSD was different. Solomon did not promote it as any sort of ‘performance-enhancing drug’. He saw the LSD trip as a ‘consciousness-expanding’ experience which would revolutionise one’s entire outlook on life, rather than any particular musical performance. LSD gave Robinson something that was quite the opposite of the heroin experience:

> ‘You realize as human beings we have an amazing challenge: we’re part of the universe, yet we have this individual sense of being cut off from everything and it’s an incredible dichotomy. That’s what we feel as spirits living in a condensed body, and in a condensed body you only feel certain emotions, like physical love as opposed to universal love. I started realizing all those things, and I realized that we have to get over the loneliness, because this life prepares us for infinite journeys’.

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* Perry Robinson and Florence Wetzel, *The Traveler*, ps.98-102.

The influence of LSD on white rock musicians of the 1960s such as the Grateful Dead and the Beatles is obvious, just from the lyrical content of their songs, which do indeed attempt to express 'the true one-ness of life'. There was also considerable psychedelic influence on Black musicians in the fields of Rock (notably Jimi Hendrix and Arthur Lee) and Soul (George Clinton's Funkadelic and Sly and the Family Stone). It is however (apart from the LSD experiments at the Lexington Narco farm) harder to attribute any such influence to the African-American New Jazz of the 1960s, which in any case was essentially an instrumental musical form. Certainly, Solomon was a close friend and associate of Ornette Coleman, but there is no evidence that he ever tripped him out (as if Coleman ever needed it!). It has been claimed that John Coltrane's album, *Om*, recorded in 1965, was an 'LSD-fueled attempt to combine jazz with the Bhagavad-Gita and the Tibetan Book of the Dead', but there is no evidence for this beyond conjecture; and in any case *Om* – released posthumously in 1968 – was widely regarded by critics as Trane's worst album (actually, apart from the vocal chants which bookend the music, it sounds to me like one of his best).*

Psychedelic Revolution

In 1964, Solomon's career took a new direction when he edited an anthology for Putnam's entitled *LSD: The Consciousness-Expanding Drug* (1964). The book featured writers with backgrounds in literature, psychiatry, medicine philosophy and theology. They included Aldous Huxley, William Burroughs, Alan Watts, Timothy Leary and Humphrey Osmond. The book was a best-seller; and Solomon followed up its success with other anthologies, including *The Marijuana Papers (*1966), *Drugs and Sexuality* (1973) and *The Coca Leaf and Cocaine Papers* (1975).

Solomon's introduction to the LSD anthology reads in part like a psychedelic version of a Situationist manifesto: what Debord called

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* Lewis Porter, *John Coltrane: His Life and Music*, p266; Pat Moody, 'Coltrane on Acid: How the Jazz Legend Mixed LSD and the Book of the Dead'. patmoodywrites.wordpress.com/2012/09/24/coltrane-on-acid-how-the-jazz-legend-mixed-lsd-and-the-book-of-the-dead/

the ‘Spectacle’, Solomon called the ‘Social Lie’. To the ‘entrenched political establishments’ psychedelics were indeed a ‘dangerous subversive agent’:

> ‘By their action of swinging wide ‘the doors of perception’ the insights they potentiate frequently enable one to see through the myriad pretensions and deceits which make up the mythology of the Social Lie. Thus to the extent that the power structures rely on the controlled popular acceptance of the Lie to shore up and stabilize their hegemonies, psychedelic substances do indeed represent a kind of political threat. Fortunately however, only the most static, repressive society need worry about psychedelic subversion. Consciousness-expanding chemicals, in reality, present no threat, but rather offer hope and encouragement to a democratically oriented social structure’.*

In 1966, Solomon left the US and moved to Europe with his family. He first lived in Palma, Majorca, until he got into trouble with the Spanish police for drugs possession. Without paying the fine, he moved on to England. In late-1967, he settled in Grantchester Meadows, Cambridge, and later rented a flat in Maida Vale, west London, for doing business in the capital. In London, he attached himself to the milieu of radical psychiatrists and researchers who were associated with the Tavistock Institute and SOMA (the Society for Mental Awareness). In autumn 1968, Solomon met Richard Kemp, a talented chemistry graduate, who he persuaded to try and make THC (which was still legal). As it turned out that it was going to be difficult to get the necessary ingredients and equipment, Solomon suggested to Kemp that making LSD (which was illegal) might bring in the money to invest in THC. In early 1969, Kemp succeeded in producing LSD in crude form; and an LSD production enterprise was born.†

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* Solomon, *LSD: The Consciousness-Expanding Drug*, p.iv; S Barry Cooper, Jan Van Leeuwen, *Alan Turing: His Work and Impact*, p.564.

† Tendler and May, ps.79-82.

5 – Steve Abrams: E.S.P., C.I.A., T.H.C.

> ‘I assume that the reader is familiar with the idea of extrasensory perception, and the meaning of the four items of it, viz., telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition and psychokinesis. These disturbing phenomena seem to deny all our usual scientific ideas. How we should like to discredit them! Unfortunately the statistical evidence, at least for telepathy, is overwhelming’.
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> Alan Turing, *Computing Machinery and Intelligence* (1950)

Parapsychology

American expatriate Steve Abrams (1938-2012) never participated in illegal production of LSD, but his research work in London in the late-1960s on THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) attracted the attention of two key players of the psychedelic underground: David Solomon and Ronald Stark. When he first came to England Abrams had previously researched ESP (extra-sensory perception) at Oxford University attracted the attention of the CIA.

Abrams, born in Chicago, was a gifted, academically advanced student who from 1957 to 1960 studied parapsychology at the University of Chicago Parapsychology Department. In 1957, Abrams began corresponding with the famous psycho-analyst, Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961). Abrams was interested in how Jung’s theory of synchronicity related to parapsychology. In Jung's theory, the meaning of a relationship between a premonition and the event it appears to foresee is that the vision and the outcome are one; their synchronicity is the ‘a-causal connecting principle’ which encompasses mind and all of matter. Jung did not try to explain psychic phenomena by physical evidence or causal relationships outside of time and space; rather, he saw such ‘unexplained’ events as occurring within the same process as discovering ‘meaning’ in dreams and mystical insights. Jung pointed out that in Eastern mysticism the word ‘Dao’ – the name given to the

'basic stuff' of the universe - can be translated as 'meaning'. Jung examined Chinese fortune telling (I Ching) and astrology, and found them useful for analysis of his patients' dreams. Jung saw events perceived as connected to one another without any cause-and-effect relationship as 'meaningful coincidences'. The meaningfulness was related to 'archetypes': universal, archaic images that derive from the collective unconscious and are actualized in interaction with the outside world.

Jung's work on synchronicity was published alongside a monograph on archetypal ideas in the theories of astronomer Johannes Kepler, written by the Nobel laureate and quantum physicist, Wolfgang Pauli. Professor Pauli had become convinced that discovering the universal laws of nature required going beyond science as it is ordinarily defined. He considered alchemy and mysticism as means to increase creativity and self-understanding. Pauli learned from a Japanese physicist at a conference in Japan that scientists in Russia were engaged in ESP research. Jung, in a letter to Abrams, mentioned he had heard that the Russians had obtained his books and that they also were engaged in ESP research that no one in the West knew about.* Abrams had worked as a research fellow at Duke University in 1957 and '58 where Professor JB Rhine was investigating the paranormal. Rhine, whose work had impressed Alan Turing,† entered into a strange correspondence with the then Vice-President of the United States, Richard Nixon, in which, Abrams recalled, Rhine claimed he had 'experimentally disproved Marxism by showing that thought can go around corners and forward into the future'. At the time a proposal was circulating around various US Government departments for a $12m 'ESP Manhattan Project', some of which related to research being carried out at Duke University. The proposal however, was rejected because, as Abrams put it, 'ESP studies had a reputation of being kind of intellectual acne'.‡

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* The letter, dated 21 October 1957, is published on pages 398-400 of Volume 2 of the *Jung Letters*, p.45.

† Andrew Hodges, *Alan Turing: The Enigma*, p.524.

‡ All quotes and narratives attributed to Steve Abrams in this book are from the author's interviews with Abrams in October 1997. The information in this section is

In 1960, Steve Abrams moved England where, as an Advanced Student at St. Catherine's College Oxford, he headed a laboratory in the Department of Biometry, investigating extrasensory perception. Abrams had a proposal to address one of the reasons academics gave for not taking the subject of parapsychology seriously: the problem of proving a negative. As Bertrand Russell put it, inability to disprove a hypothesis does not prove it. Abrams sought to address that challenge by seeking statistical evidence of extra-sensory perception. Abrams told me:

> 'If the results of major series of work that had been done in parapsychology were correct then there were certain consequences that must flow from that. The work I initially composed was fairly technical and essentially statistical in character. It was based on both tests and research; a re-analysis of data and generation of new data and some new experimental designs'.

Following Jung's lead, Abrams' enquiries into parapsychological research in the Soviet Bloc got a positive response in the form of a letter from a parapsychologist in Czechoslovakia, who passed on the address of Professor Leonid Vasiliev, head of ESP research at Leningrad University. As Abrams found himself short of funding for his research, he tried writing off to US government departments, including the Office of Naval Research and the Air Force Advanced Projects Research Organisation. As a result of his efforts, Abrams was contacted by an organisation in New York which he had never heard of, called the Human Ecology Fund. A letter signed by the fund's executive secretary, Dr. James Monroe, explained that the subject of ESP had come up in a recent conversation with officials in the Behavioural Sciences Division of the US Air Force. 'He said he was shown my letter,' Abrams explained. 'He found it interesting and thought it worth initiating some correspondence for possible grant application'.

As he was preparing to take a boat to New York to clinch a grant from the Human Ecology Fund, Abrams attended a talk at

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distilled from the account of Abrams ESP research in *Acid: A New Secret History of LSD* (2001), ps. 47-57.

Kensington Town Hall in London on April 12, 1961 organised by the Society of Psychical Research. The speaker, Arthur Koestler, was investigating paranormal phenomena, which he claimed could not be explained by theoretical physics. Koestler was also about to take a boat to the USA, for a conference on 'Control of the Mind' organised by the Joshua Macy Foundation (later revealed to have been secretly sponsored by the CIA). Abrams suggested to Koestler that he might like to 'stop off' at Duke University to check out see JB Rhine's work on ESP. That evening, anthropologist, Francis Huxley 'told Koestler about this interesting chap at Harvard called Tim Leary and his colleague Richard Alpert and said go and have a look at their research'. Abrams took a boat to New York, where he lunched with James Monroe and Preston Abbot, the programme director of the Human Ecology Foundation:

> 'I told them Jung was going to be on my committee. They looked blankly at me, I knew immediately Jung was dead. Then they showed me the New York Times with his obituary. I'd had a very weird experience the night before… on the boat I got a terrible chill. I went down in the hold to get a sweater out of my steamer trunk which had a load of old 78 records in it; none of them were broken, but there was my picture of Jung - and the glass was shattered… Correspondents of Jung's all over the world seemed to recall strange experiences like that at the time of his death. He always fancied himself as a bit of a poltergeist! There's a story when he was with Freud and this bookcase makes a cracking sound. Jung says that's a 'poltergeist and I predict it's going to happen again' and it does. I wouldn't take it too far but the symbolism in these stories is fascinating enough'.*

After his meeting with the Human Ecology Fund officers, Abrams caught a flight to Duke University, changing planes in Washington. Whilst in the capital's airport, he went to a public call-box:

> 'Just for a laugh, because I'm me, I picked up the phone, rang the CIA and asked to speak to Alan Dulles, the CIA

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* Aniela Jaffe, *The Life and Work of C. G. Jung*, ps. 136-7.

> Director. I said I had information about secret Russian research on telepathy… I got through very quickly to a high place and someone said ‘‘Don’t come here, we’ll send someone to come and see you, they’ll be there in 45 minutes’’.’

The man who arrived wearing a double-breasted mackintosh was Robert Lashbrook, later to be identified as MK-Ultra boss Sidney Gottlieb’s deputy; and ‘escort’ of Frank Olson in 1953 on the night when he mysteriously ‘fell’ from the eleventh floor hotel window of the Statler Hotel in New York. Abrams and Lashbrook talked for about an hour: ‘He appeared to be a crew-cut semi-academic type and we carried on this fake sceptical, knowledgeable, non-knowledgeable bullshit kind of conversation’.

Following this meeting Abrams travelled on to Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. On arriving, Abrams learned of a drug experiment the next day and he signed a medical release form to participate in it. Arriving at the laboratory at noon, he was told that Koestler had taken up Francis Huxley’s suggestion and dropped by to see JB Rhine the previous week in the company of Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert. They had all taken psilocybin, but Koestler had suffered a bad trip. As they had left the bottle of pills behind, JB Rhine, wanting ‘to clear his head’, organised a tripping session with his wife and colleagues. By this time, Abrams was beginning to discover the Human Ecology society was more than it seemed:

> ‘The connection between the Human Ecology Fund and the CIA was still a very deep national secret at this time, June 1961, and the existence of the MK-Ultra project wasn’t even known to the CIA financial controller [who reported to President Kennedy] until the following year, 1962. Now, in three days, I’d made the connection between the Human Ecology Fund and the CIA and contrived to be given the ‘acid test’. I’d had a row with Rhine on the Monday, before I went on to Chicago where my family live, and Rhine’s secretary, Farilla David, told me the next day that the CIA had been round to do a security check on me. She had kept them from Rhine who was in the next room, saying he was out of town, and gave them the security interview herself. So the CIA knew that

> I'd contrived to take the 'acid test,' made the connection between the Human Ecology Fund and the CIA and they must have wondered whether I was telepathic or taking the piss, or whether I knew something more. I was rather in a position where I could write my own ticket. I was asking the spooks to give me money to study spooks. And to overcome their reserve I had to spook them!'

Abrams had been invited by Professor Vasiliev to come to Leningrad and discuss ESP research, though he spoke no Russian. In Leningrad, Vasiliev offered Abrams the copyright on his manuscript with other published and unpublished material, so he could arrange for publication in the West.

Abrams asked Lashbrook for help with translation of the papers. The CIA man's reply, dated January 11, 1962, tells Abrams to write no more letters to him (i.e. at the CIA) because the Human Ecology Fund had already read their correspondence. As far as the translations were concerned, he wrote, Human Ecology would be glad to do it. Abrams told me:

> 'I remembered my meeting with Bob Lashbrook. I was fairly naive about the CIA, and I assumed it gathered intelligence for other American government departments, that most of what they did was quite routine and that espionage was just a part of it… the CIA is a very big thing'.

In one of the documents obtained in 1977 by John Marks under the Freedom of Information, MK-Ultra director Sidney Gottleib, on August 20, 1961, describes Abrams as an 'unwitting' asset, but it suggests that he could be capable of figuring the relationship between Human Ecology Fund and the CIA's secret program (M-Ultra) out for himself, and that he had already made contact with the Director's office. Gottlieb institutes further security enquiries in case it becomes necessary to brief Abrams on the MK-Ultra project. Unknown to Abrams, his deal with Human Ecology was listed as 'Project 136' of the still-secret CIA MK-Ultra program.

As the first Westerner to meet Russians involved in ESP, Abrams attracted Western media attention. On 10 April, he gave a lecture to the Society for Psychical Research on 'ESP Research in the Soviet Union'. The following evening he was interviewed on the

Tonight programme on BBC television. An article in the *Daily Mail* began: 'On a sponge rubber mattress at Oxford University's Unit of Biometry a young American rests. He is not asleep but is deep in thought. That is not unusual in Oxford, where they pride themselves in thinking. But what is in the mind of Stephen Abrams is very strange indeed'. The article went on to say that Abrams was working on what he called the 'Intercontinental Mental Missile'.

The Human Ecology Fund had awarded Abrams project – 'Experiments in Extrasensory Perception to Stephen I. Abrams of Oxford University' – a grant of $8,579. According to an article entitled 'Parapsychology in Intelligence', published in the winter 1977 issue of the CIA's in-house journal, *Studies in Intelligence*, (now declassified), Abrams gained the attentions of the CIA because Sidney Gottlieb decided to investigate ESP in 1961. The CIA historian, Kenneth Kress, writes 'Abrams prepared a review article which claimed ESP was demonstrated but not understood or controllable'.

Human Ecology programme director, Preston Abbott, flew over to England and see how Abrams' work was going. Asked about the translations of the Russian material, Abbott told Abrams it was, 'out of the question; it was too expensive; it would cost $2,000 per translation, so there'd have to be a fresh grant application and there wasn't that much money left in the kitty. Forget about it'. Abrams replied, 'But the agency said you'd be glad to do it' and handed him Lashbrook's letter from the CIA, which was assured him that Human Ecology would fund translations of Russian research onto ESP. Abrams recalled:

> 'He asked me if I'd shown the letter to anyone else. I said that I hadn't. He said that if I had the Human Ecology Fund would be unable to ***give*** money away. He was very, very angry. He appeared not to know that he was working for the CIA until that point. He said he'd been offered a secret job in the CIA and turned it down. He said the CIA had then caused him a lot of trouble by mounting an investigation to find out why'. He phoned long distance to Harold Wolff, the chair of the Human Ecology Foundation, and insisted that James Monroe – his superior – be fired on the spot - as he was. Abbott then said to me

> "don't worry about him, he didn't like you, he wouldn't tell you that you got your grant until the day you left"'.

In the 1963 biennial prospectus for the Human Ecology Foundation hardly anyone on the board of directors in 1961 remains, most of the staff names have changed, and the New York office is no longer listed. It later transpired that the main reason for this hasty reshuffle was that the Kennedy White House had discovered what had been kept from them concerning the MK-Ultra project. According to John Marks, by 1963, having sampled 'everything from palm reading to subliminal perception', it was time to move on. The Society for the Study of Human Ecology had served its purpose and now the CIA's money could be spent elsewhere. Abrams eventually came to suspect that the CIA may have wasted a great deal of money trying to extend some of the research into ESP, without understanding it, let alone learning how to control it.

Potboilers

In January 1967, Abrams wrote a paper on cannabis use at Oxford University as a contribution to a prospective book, entitle *Leaves of Grass*. Abrams' literary agent, Peter Owen, then sold it to *The People* newspaper 'for a pittance'. This embroiled Abrams in controversy, but he pressed on regardless. Presenting evidence to the University Student Health Committee, he argued that the Home Secretary should be pressed to set up an investigation of LSD and cannabis. The committee backed the suggestion and the Labour Government responded positively by setting up a Parliament committee to investigate. This led to headlines in the press such as 'LSD and Cannabis: Dons Demand National Enquiry' and 'Pot Smokers Lobby Moves into Gear'

There is no doubt that the phenomenon of LSD consumption loosened the attitudes of its users towards cannabis. Abrams, although never part of the acid underground, was certainly familiar with some of its key players. He explained his own attitude to LSD as follows:

> 'I don't know if acid blew away a lot of people's brains. There was a study done of a group of people who took acid with Leary and they were compared with another matched group of the sort of people who might have taken

> acid with Leary but didn't. There didn't seem a lot of difference when they were examined twenty years later; the ones who had taken acid seemed a little bit more adventurous than might be expected. Acid has such a profound subjective effect that I'm amazed at the absence of its long term effects. I'm amazed more people didn't jump out of windows. You'd be completely out of your head or think you were but other people would treat you as being quite normal. I used to enjoy having conversations with policemen while on acid, whereas I was quite paranoid with dope'.

Steve Abrams was the founder and director of SOMA, an organisation set up in 1967 to promote a more positive attitude towards the smoking of cannabis, and reform the punitive laws which the police were using to lock up those caught in possession. Abrams explained that one meaning of the word SOMA comes from the universal tranquilliser in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. But SOMA also refers to the ancient Vedic SOMA of the Aryan Pantheon: 'the notion of soma as the mystical drug, the mystical, unknown psychedelic of the Vedas. Soma is the Indian plant god of the moon'. Some studies have argued that the original 'universal tranquilliser' must have been a flyagaric mushroom and there is a strong argument for seeing hallucinatory experiences as the very basis of the European spiritual tradition. Francis Huxley, a SOMA committee member, 'had us all going on about the body image, and soma means body, and it's a good name for an organisation'.

The SOMA organisation's famous full-page advertisement in *The Times* of July 24, 1967, calling for a reform of the cannabis laws, was signed by a host of 'big names', including Nobel Prize winner Francis Crick, novelist Graham Greene, Members of Parliament Tom Driberg and Brian Walden, future Tory government minister Jonathan Aitken, theatre critic Kenneth Tynan, television presenter David Dimbleby, psychiatrist RD Laing, artist David Hockney, and the four Beatles. The statement quoted Spinoza: 'All laws which can be violated without doing anyone any harm are laughed at... will foment crime rather than lessen it'.

SOMA was soon incorporated as the Soma Research Association, Ltd: whose board included Steve Abrams, Francis Crick,

RD Laing. David Cooper and Francis Huxley. SOMA engaged in active research and medical programs affiliated to a National Health Service surgery in Notting Hill. It was clear to Abrams that many of the rich and famous were now tacitly admitting to using cannabis. Abrams hit on a way of legally supplying such people with dope in the form of tincture of cannabis, which could be legally prescribed by doctors. Doing this, he thought, would force the police to explain why they only seemed interested in raiding Caribbean cafés in Notting Hill and searching long-haired teenagers on the streets of Soho.

Tincture of cannabis – not to be confused with 'hash oil' or liquid THC – is made by percolating chopped marijuana in alcohol, which produces alcohol-soluble components of the cannabis. Unsuitable for smoking, it is very effective taken orally. SOMA members at a National Health surgery were already writing prescriptions for tincture of cannabis as a substitute drug for alcoholics and junkies. Bing Spear, head of the Drug Inspectorate at the Home Office, obligingly made arrangements to import 254 kilos of tincture of cannabis from India – quite a lot considering seizures of illegal cannabis amounted only to 296 kilos in 1967.

In the late-1940s at the University of Illinois, the famous biochemist, Roger Adams, succeeded in isolating a semi-synthetic dimethylheptyl derivative of THC cannabidiol. In the early 1960s, Israeli biochemists, Mechoulam and Gaoni, repeated Adams semi-synthesis and then determined the biosynthetic pathway by which the marijuana plant synthesises cannabinoids. This allowed them to make the first synthesis of THC. According to Abrams, the derivative, like LSD, is active in the nannogram range, and fifty times stronger than THC.*

In 1968 there was no legal bar to making THC. SOMA contacted Mechoulam, who sent laboratory notes for making THC with a small sample. Adam Parker-Rhodes at SOMA was taking an advanced degree in pharmacology and studying morphine until Abrams pointed out that THC was brand new and had potential ~~for a hundred thesis topics, a~~ny one of which would be a 'dead easy PhD'.

* Jon Gettman, 'Marijuana and the Human Brain,' *High Times*, March 1986.

‘All you had to do was get hold of some, give it to some rats, do a couple of tests and you’d made a new contribution to knowledge’. The SOMA team started work on THC research and Abrams’ colleague, Glynne Webley-Everard, came up with some money for it. After some hitches making the base material olivetol at the custom pharmaceutical firm, Koch-Light, SOMA’s Nobel Prize winner scientist, Francis Crick, corrected the formula and found it worked.* SOMA’s chief chemist (and self-described Situationist) Dick Pountain, working in a lab at the back of Chelsea football ground, produced seven grams at a cost of £1600. Then like good scientists, in Pountain’s words, ‘we bio-assayed it subjectively’. According to Abrams:

> ‘It was like the very finest Moroccan kief with a hint of cocaine. It was very, very good dope and it satisfied me that all the main effects of cannabis are due to this one chemical – THC - (tetra-hydro-cannibinol). And since we learned that 90 to 95 per cent of the THC was destroyed in the act of combustion and the other 5 per cent went inside you, I arranged for Dick Pountain to have it made up as an aerosol - and of course there is no danger of damage to the lungs with an aerosol’.

Abrams soon became a target of the tabloids:

> ‘What happened in the summer of ‘68 was really quite amazing. At this point our laboratory was legally making THC for research, so the *News of the World* comes out with a full page article… a picture of me with an arrow pointing at my head and the words “This Dangerous Man MUST be Stopped”. Quite inflammatory stuff. It said he’s found a legal way to make drugs. But the article had no real content. It said that a Nobel prize-winner called Montagu Phillips had left our advisory council because we were making too much THC to be justified for experimental use. Montagu Phillips was not a Nobel Prize

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* The widely-circulated story that Francis Crick discovered DNA whilst tripping on acid has been thoroughly debunked. See Andy Roberts, ‘Francis Crick, DNA & LSD: Psychedelic History in the Age of Science’, *Psychedelic Press U.K.*, *Volume 2*. 2015.

> winner; though we had a real Nobel prize winner - Francis Crick - on the SOMA council, along with Laing and the rest of them… The article did get round to admitting that the Home Office were aware of our experiments with THC and had no objection to them'.

SOMA, Solomon and Stark

In London, around mid-1969, Abrams was asked by David Solomon if he would like to meet a 'fellow American' who wanted help in obtaining scientific research information on THC. Abrams was suspicious and reluctant to agree to the meeting, partly because he didn't entirely trust Solomon and partly because the previous two years of campaigning for SOMA had put him on his guard for a potential set-up – either by secretive state forces, hostile Sunday newspapers or gangsters. Abrams had been increasingly aware of Solomon's heightened profile on the periphery of SOMA and although he appreciated Solomon's pioneering writings on LSD and cannabis, he had an instinct not to let him assume any role within the SOMA organisation. The friend Solomon wanted Abrams to meet was fellow American, Ronald Hadley Stark:

> 'Solomon, who I'd known for a year or two, was very pushy, and as soon as he learned I'd made contact with Laing, or Francis Crick or someone like that he would be there after me. His approach was badly bungled, I became suspicious about Stark for no particular reason and at first I refused to meet him. Finally, because Solomon was being quite persistent, I reckoned I should let this guy Stark know that I had nothing of use to him. I had instructions for making small quantities of THC, a gram or two at a time. But that assumed you had the starting material to begin with, so that couldn't be of any interest. I said he could meet with Adam Parker-Rhodes, our pharmacologist and Dick Pountain, our chemist, if he gave a hundred dollars donation to SOMA. The cheque bounced but cleared the second time… When Stark met them he gave them his business card, for a company called

> Interbiochemical Ltd. The company had an office in Ghana'.

Abrams asked Glynne Webley-Everard, of Avalon Botanicals, SOMA's pharmaceutical company, to check Interbiochemical out through his company accountant's office in Accra. They discovered that Stark owned almost a controlling interest in the State pharmaceutical house there and had a contract to supply the Ghanaian government with pharmaceuticals. Abrams decided at this point to telephone Bing Spear, head of the Home Office drugs inspectorate:

> 'I said, "This guy is heavy duty, I've not come into contact with anyone like him. He's not a drug dealer; he's Mafia or CIA or both, but it's the heavy mob." I'd never made a call like that to anybody but I wanted to cover myself and I felt I should give him this information'.

Abrams had no illusions about the dangers of putting something as untried and powerful as the new synthetic THC, or its even more powerful derivatives, onto the market. If that was what Stark was intending, he faced no legal obstacle. The Dangerous Drugs Act regulated drugs already under international control; and THC, the active principle of cannabis, was not illegal during the 1960s. THC had a status quite separate from that of tincture of cannabis. The structure of THC had not been determined when the law had been written or when the UN Convention had last been modified.

The following year, 1970, Stark, accompanied by David Solomon, turned up at Abrams' place-of-residence, Hilton Hall, near Cambridge. This classically landscaped property had been the well-known haunt of the Bloomsbury Group; and busts of Virginia Woolf and Lytton Strachey stood in the hall. An old Bloomsbury survivor, the writer Bunny Garnett, had given over use of the house for a cheap rent to a group of writers and artists which included: Abrams; Jenny Fabian, author of the best-selling paperback novel, *Groupie*; and Johnny Byrne, Liverpool poet and screenwriter. Solomon introduced his friend as 'Mr Simpson' but eventually Abrams, who knew Solomon had been talking about Stark for months, asked him: 'Are you the legendary Ronald Stark?' 'Mr Simpson' denied this at first but later owned up, identifying himself as 'Ronald Hadley St. John Whitney Stark'.

Stark moved into Hilton Hall for a few months and with the offer of financial support tried to persuade Abrams to resurrect SOMA, which by this time was foundering due to the backlash against the ‘cannabis lobby’. Stark became a sort of resident millionaire. Content to sleep on the couch rather than in a posh hotel, he would happily take a dozen people out to dinner at the local Monsieur Andre's restaurant and would pay the Hilton Hall electricity and telephone bills. Before Stark's arrival, the residents had noticed signs of what they assumed to be police interest in Hilton Hall, which was being regularly visited by Solomon. They would notice, for example, a car frequently parked with its lights on nearby, which would cruise past them as they walked home late at night. The appearance of Stark, coincided with the apparent lifting of the surveillance. Abrams recalled:

> ‘We were quite aware what was going on with the Brotherhood in case someone would turn up with a suitcase full of acid. We didn’t go so far as to take part in any of Stark's activities. We just benefited from his largesse.’

Stark told Abrams he had studied at John Hopkins University, and worked as biochemist at Cornell University. Stark claimed to have studied under a English expatriate chemistry professor who flew a union jack over his laboratory. Abrams found Stark's alleged medical credentials credible, as did others of a medical background who met Stark in England. On one occasion, friends saw Stark administer very expert advice when they happened to be on the scene of a near fatal road accident. But Abrams' unease about Stark was growing:

> ‘He had a card that said he was a director of ICI! I couldn't help overhearing his phone calls because I had a little device on the amplifier, a little suction coil that was basically a telephone amplifier; it didn't do a very good job of amplifying your voice but you could have a three-way conversation with it. I discovered by accident that if I had that turned on and somebody was having a conversation I could listen in on it.I mean you didn't listen compulsively to Stark's conversations; they were generally unintelligible. I became concerned because he seemed to be involved with arms trading, there were indications of

> terrorist connections. This is pretty vague, but he seemed to be buying and selling chemicals which often by their nature, and with the quantities he was dealing with, seemed to have nothing to do with making drugs or drug factories'.

In 1967, Stark's wealth was recorded as $3,000, but by the following year he was living in a flash apartment in Greenwich Village, decorated with Picasso and De Kooning originals. Stark told some people he was a scion of the Austrian branch of the super-rich Whitney dynasty (founded by John Whitney in 1635 when he arrived in Watertown, Massachusetts from England). Stark told others he was the son of a rich biochemist who had fled from Germany to Switzerland in the 1930s to escape anti-Jewish persecution.* Stark also claimed to have worked on top secret projects at the Department of Defense during the Kennedy Administration.

The available records on Stark's background paint a rather different picture. A number of FBI and DEA files on Stark activities through the 1960s and '70s have now been declassified following applications by researchers. Although some of the files are heavily redacted, they impart crucial insights. Stark was born in New York City on April 9, 1938 to Sol and Leah Shtitsky. After his father's death, his mother legally changed the family name to Stark on September 8, 1953. Stark studied for one year at Bard College, Avon on Hudson; three years at City College, New York; and one-and-a-half years at Yeshiva University, New York. He did not obtain a degree from any of these institutions but he did manage to obtain employment in the United States Defense Department.†

In March 1962 Stark was interviewed by two FBI agents as a potential 'security risk'. Stark told them that he had worked at the Bureau of Ships as head of Technical Analysis and Operations Research in the main Navy building, Washington, D. C. before being

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* Tendler and May, p.78; Lee and Shlain p249; Martin A. Lee, 'Rasputin of LSD', *National Reporter*, Fall 1988. Richard Lee and Colin Pratt, *Operation Julie*, p.71; Correspondence. T Scully to D Black, September 2019.

† FBI files on Stark. www.muckrock.com/foi/united-states-of-america-10/ronald-hadley-stark-fbi-file-number-812020-58191/#file-200559

sent on loan to the Defense Department to work in the office of the Deputy Director of Defense, Research and Engineering in the Pentagon Building. But what the FBI agents, acting on received intelligence, wanted to know was had Stark, in the course of his employment, seen any Navy or Department of Defense records originating from the FBI; and if he had, had he ever leaked such information to anyone? Stark told the FBI agents that on one occasion some people he was socialising with asked him if he knew whether the FBI kept lists of people who were campaigning against the resumption of nuclear bomb testing. Stark said he assumed he had been asked this because of his job, which they thought might have given him access to sensitive material. He advised his companions that although he believed that the FBI kept lists of people regarded as subversive, he did not know if their activities counted as such. According to the FBI report:

> 'Stark was emphatically advised that he should in the future refrain from making any statement to anyone regarding FBI information obtained by him through official access or from sources to which he did not have legitimate access. In addition, Stark was warned in no uncertain terms of the possibility of the prosecutive action for disclosure of FBI information and told that the FBI would be alert for any such reports of his activities in the future'.

The agents report also noted:

> 'Stark is reported to possess a sidearm and his mental condition is reported to be questionable. Therefore care should be exercised in contacts with him.'*

Wisely perhaps, as he was being economical with the truth regarding his government employment, Stark declined to be interviewed with the assistance of a polygraph. In any case, Stark was in trouble with another agency: the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI). As a result of an ONI investigation, in December 1962 he was charged with having made false statements to obtain government employment. In January 1963, Stark entered a plea of guilty at the Southern District of New

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* Ibid. March 39 1962. SAC, Richmond to Director, FBI.

York. Facing a maximum sentence of five years, Stark was put on probation, which he soon violated. In order to avoid prison Stark managed to get himself diagnosed as possibly suffering from a mental disorder and was referred to Bellevue Hospital in New York. When he again violated his probation Stark was sent to Lewisburg Prison in Pennsylvania for assessment regarding his mental health. At his next court appearance the judge extended his probation to include treatment at the New York Psychiatric Institute, Columbia University. While at the Institute, Stark was allowed to take a day job at Cornell University Medical School, New York. Although Stark was employed as a janitor, he pretended to be a medical student and mixed with the faculty community. After his release from the Institute he sold a biochemical process he had filched from his medical contacts to CalBiochem, and filed several patent applications which brought him a great deal of money. Stark moved into a more up-market residence at East 76th Street, then another one at West 12th Street, Greenwich Village. He gave his business address as Calbiochem, 3655 Medford Street, Los Angeles, California.

Stark's next encounter with the FBI was in December 1967. FBI agents interviewed him at the request of French police for cheque fraud. In December 1966, while visiting Paris, Stark had signed a bouncing cheque of $850 for a rare book entitled, *L'Ordre des Oiseaux*, and taken it back to the US in violation of French law restricting export of valuable works of art. Stark told the FBI that he did not recall if he actually asked his bank in New York to stop payment on the check, but may have done so when he returned to the United States. The FBI interviewers advised that they would make a record of his explanation. Their report noted Stark's previous altercations with the law:

> 'Stark was subsequently exposed as a pathological liar who falsified his application and other official papers, in connection with his Government employment. In addition, a sworn statement was obtained from an individual who alleged that Stark attempted to interest him in a scheme to forge works of art for sale on a nationwide basis'.*

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* Ibid. FBI memo December 4 1967.

In later years Stark would claim to have served in the Kennedy administration at John McNamara's Department of Defence, working on top secret projects. He said these 'disgusted him' so much that he resigned his post. One of those to whom Stark told this tale, Tim Scully, observes:

> 'He claimed to have at one time worked for the Department of Defense under President Kennedy and to have been involved in making life-and-death decisions during that time. Many years later I learned that, as with many of his stories, there was a tiny germ of truth buried beneath a huge pile of bullshit'.*

In early 1968, Ron Stark took LSD for the first time. As was the case with so many initiates, it was, for better or worse, a life-changing experience. As subsequent chapters of the book will show, Stark's role was to impact dramatically on the LSD underground on both sides of the Atlantic.

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* Tim Scully, 'Some frequently asked questions' (unpublished mss.); Correspondence. T Scully to D Black, September 2019; Tendler and May, p.78; Lee and Shlain, p.249; Martin A. Lee, 'Rasputin of LSD', *National Reporter*, Fall 1988.

6 – The New Prohibition in the USA versus the Acid Underground

'To live is to be hunted.'
Philip K Dick, *Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said*

Psychedelic Alchemy

Between the early 1960s and early 1970s at least 10 million Americans took LSD. They were supplied by scores of underground LSD laboratories, which sprouted up in various parts of the United States between 1963 and 1973. About fifty of these labs are known about; some of them were in operation for just a few months, others for years. Apart from the 'known' labs (which are usually only known about because of prosecutions), there must have been many others, which made large quantities of LSD, but were never discovered.* For the purposes of this book I would emphasize that the LSD chemists who feature in the following pages by no means produced *most* of LSD in the USA; they were just the ones unfortunate enough to become 'famous' (or 'infamous) for their work. As a general rule, manufacturers of illegal substances, not wanting to end up in court, avoid publicity. One of them in particular, achieved 'legendary' status as 'Mr LSD' without ever wanting it.

He was born August Owsley Stanley III (1935-2011), grandson of a US senator from Kentucky, and is more commonly

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* Tim Scully, 'A Sketch of the Early History of Underground LSD Manufacturing'. Paper presented via Skype at the Breaking Convention event at the University of Greenwich (2013). According to the US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), 'Between 1966 and 1970, the annual number of [hallucinogen] initiates rose almost sixfold, from 168,000 to 956,000'

known as ‘Owsley’, or to his friends, as ‘Bear Stanley’.* In 1964 Owsley took LSD for the first time in the form of a somewhat impure green goo, made by Douglas George, an amateur chemist who distributed it free in Berkeley. Later that same year, Owsley tried a full-dose Sandoz LSD capsule and was so impressed that he sought out all of the published material he could find on LSD manufacture.

Owsley studied a book on alchemy, entitled *The Kybalion.* Published in 1908, its authors (the pseudonymous ‘Three Initiates’) claimed it was based on the teachings of Hermes Trismegistus, the semi-mythical Egyptian (some say Greek) sage. What impressed Owsley was the book’s thesis that the alchemic ‘transformation of substances’ was purely allegorical. In Owsley’s interpretation, ‘The lead and the gold is the lead of the primitive nature into the gold of the enlightened man. Alchemy didn’t talk about lead into gold until it had to deal with the church in the early Middle Ages’. *The Kybalion* ‘was perfect because it put into total context all the things I had experienced on acid. The universe is a creation entirely within a being that is outside time and space, and dreaming what we are. Everything is connected, because it’s all being created by this one consciousness. And we are tiny reflections of the mind that is creating the universe. That’s what alchemy says’.

Between the years of 1950 and 1965, over 1,000 scientific papers on the potential therapeutic effects of LSD and other hallucinogens were turned out by researchers. During the same period some 40,000 patients were treated with LSD therapy as treatment for

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* For this chapter I am indebted to Tim Scully’s correspondence with me between September 2019 and May 2020. have used the information from the following texts: The *Sunshine Makers* (Documentary film); Robert Greenfield, ‘Owsley Stanley: The King of LSD’, *Rolling Stone*, 14 March, 2011; Timothy Leary, *Flashbacks*; M Lee and B Shlain, *Acid Dreams*; R Lee and C Pratt, *Operation Julie*; Christopher Robbins, *The Invisible Airforce*; Tim Scully, ‘Nick Sand Obituary’; Tim Scully, ‘Time with the Dead: The LA Acid Tests’, *Dead Studies, Vol 3,* 2013; Scully, ‘Sketch of the Early History of Underground LSD Manufacturing’ (unpublished manuscript); Rebecca Sims, ‘The CIA and Financial Institutions’, *Covert Action Information Bulletin no. 35*; Tendler and May, *The Brotherhood*; Peter Whitmer and Bruce VanWyngarden, *Aquarius Revisited*; and Ronald D Craze, *More Snakes Than Ladders*.

mental illnesses. But in 1962, the U.S. Congress passed new drug safety regulations and the Food and Drug Administration began to clamp down on research into the effects of LSD as well as its manufacture and distribution. Owsley however, was not deterred.

In the winter of 1964 Owsley bought 40 grams of lysergic acid from the Sigma chemical company and made his first batch of LSD at the Green Factory in Berkeley. In February 1965 the Green Factory was raided by the authorities and Owsley Stanley moved his lab equipment to the basement of a friend's house in Los Angeles. So far, Owsley's LSD hadn't been pure enough to crystallize, but he soon solved this problem by mastering chromatography – a technique for separating out a mixture of chemicals.

With his partner, Melissa Cargill, he set up another LSD lab at a rented a house on Lafler Road, Los Angeles, near California State University. He bought lysergic acid from the Cyclo chemical company and made several grams of pure crystalline LSD amounting to at least 30,000 doses. These were put into gelatin capsules and sold by mail order. The method of putting LSD into capsules had its drawbacks. It was difficult to get equal-sized doses into the capsules because they had to be filled by pressing the dry powder into them on a flat surface, such as a mirror; but the amount of powder that got into each capsule could vary significantly, depending on how the pressing was done. Also, unscrupulous wholesalers could remove the content of the capsule, dilute or counterfeit it, and put it into a larger number of capsules. Owsley Stanley, in his determination to market a standard dose of 300 µg (micrograms) with a solid promise of purity, switched from capsules to tablets, which were far more accurate and consistent in dose size. Owsley obtained triturate boards to produce uniform dose sizes in a tablet form which would be very difficult to counterfeit. There remained however, the problem that in the final drying process the active ingredient in the moisture tended to migrate to the surface of the tablet, where it could be undermined by sweat from handling or exposure to UV light. He solved this problem by dispersing the LSD content in tribasic calcium phosphate, a chemical which could adhere itself to the LSD strongly enough to prevent any migration to the surface of the tablet during the evaporation of the solvent. The phosphate accounted for 10 per cent of the total weight of the tablet; the remaining 90 per cent was made up with lactose.

The Los Angeles drug squad soon learned about Owsley Stanley's activities after he sold a gram of LSD to the guitarist, Perry Lederman. After Lederman told everyone he sold it to that Owsley Stanley had made it, the drug squad put Owsley under surveillance. They went through his trash, where they found letters from his mail-order customers, and also obtained copies of his orders for lysergic acid from the Cyclo company.

Owsley and the Grateful Dead

On December 11th, 1965, Owsley attended a Grateful Dead 'Acid Test' gig at Muir Beach, Marin County. Tripping heavily, he found the Dead to be 'magic personified', and 'the most amazing group ever'. On January 29, Owsley attended another Dead performance and Acid Test at Sound City, a San Francisco radio studio. The band members, impressed by Owsley's enthusiasm and resourcefulness, suggested he become their manager. Owsley insisted he would be of more use as their sound engineer. The Dead, like most other rock bands of the time, were using equipment which made unwanted noises and produced a poorly balanced overall sound. After the Dead took up his offer, Owsley introduced state-of-the art equipment such as high-quality cables and connections which minimized hum and hiss from the instruments, and big hi-fi 'Voice of the Theater' speakers for the PA system. At the Sound City Acid Test Owsley, having met Tim Scully a few weeks earlier, offered him and his friend Don Douglas a chance to travel with him and the Grateful Dead to Los Angeles and work with him doing electronics and roadie work for the band.

Owsley had experience of engineering in radio and television, but he didn't have enough knowledge of electronic circuit design to implement his ideas for customised equipment. Scully had the technical know-how; and he also wanted to make LSD with Owsley. Scully, born 1944 in Berkeley, California, had studied math and physics at the University of California until 1963. From 1963 to 1965 he was employed by Atomic Laboratories Inc. as an electronics design consultant. In 1965 he took evening classes at University of California in advanced

calculus and atomic physics. On April 15, 1965, he took LSD for the first time.

In late-1965 advertisements began to appear in California posing the question, 'Can you pass the acid test?' Properly defined, the 'Acid Tests', were events with music played by the Grateful Dead, LSD supplied by Owsley, organized by the Merry Pranksters, a group of Californian pagans gathered together by Ken Kesey, author of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *Sometimes a Great Notion*. Kesey and the Pranksters traversed the country in an old school bus, repainted in psychedelic colours with the words, 'Caution! Weird Load', inscribed on the back. Neal Cassady, former road-buddy of Jack Kerouac, went along as driver. The Pranksters' stated mission was to re-experience America as a 'trip' and to 'prank' its citizens out of their conformist conditioning by means of noisy, rude, but colourful behaviour and LSD tripping. As it turned out, even non-conformists, like the Millbrook community in Poughkeepsie found the Pranksters too wild; especially after Kesey 'adopted' a chapter of the Hell's Angels as his bus-escort. According to Richard Alpert, when the Pranksters' visited Millbrook it felt like being in 'a pastoral Indian village invaded by a whooping cowboy band of Wild West saloon carousers'. The Pranksters' events featured Owsley's acid disguised as a vat of Orange Kool-Aid bearing the warning label, 'Electric'.

Owsley had serious doubts about what the Pranksters were up to. He thought the Pranksters' practice of 'Magic' had its dangers:

> 'Kesey was playing with something he did not understand. I said to him, "You guys are fucking around with something that people have known about forever. It's sometimes called witchcraft, and it's extremely dangerous. You're dealing with part of the unconscious mind that they used to define as angels and devils. You have to be very careful, because there are all these warnings. All the occult literature about ceremonial magic warns about being very careful when you start exploring these areas in the mind." And they laughed at me'.

Tim Scully, in a memoir of his time with Owsley and the Grateful Dead, describes one of the early Acid-Tests in California:

> 'Everyone paid admission: all the people in the acid test, all the members of the Grateful Dead, and anyone who was seduced off the street. It was all very democratic. And also potentially problematic. At the Watts acid test, for example, folks who had never heard of LSD came in, drank some Kool-Aid, and started getting high. If you were surrounded by strobe lights, with Pranksters doing things with their sound systems – all designed to disorient – the experience could be really fun, if that's what you were into. But it could be terrifying if you didn't know what to expect'.*

Scully installed transformers to reduce the impedance of the signals being transmitted through long cables, which otherwise picked up excessive 60 cycle hum from nearby power lines. He designed and built a mixing desk to receive the modified signals and output them into both the PA and the tape recorder. From January to July 1966 Scully lived and worked with Grateful Dead and their entourage, designing and installing numerous other technical innovations as well as taking on roadie responsibilities.

In March 1966 in Los Angeles a group of hippies were sitting in a Cantor's cafe known as 'Capsule Corner', amiably chatting to photo-journalist Lawrence Schiller of *Life* magazine, who was working with correspondent Gerald Moore for an article on the new hippie sub-culture. The mood darkened however, when a young woman came in brandishing a peanut jar full of LSD tablets and triumphantly announced, 'Look what I just bought from Owsley'. Bob Hamilton, a friend of Scully's, rushed to a phone-box and called Owsley, telling him he should clean up his premises. On March 25 1966, *Life's* front cover appeared with headline, 'The Exploding Effect of the Mind Drug that got Out of Control: LSD'. The coverage in *Life* set off a hysterical reaction in the rest of the media.

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* Tim Scully, 'Time with the Dead: the LA Acid Tests', *Dead Studies, Vol. 3*, 2013

By the end of July 1966, Owsley (now calling himself ‘Bear Stanley’) had run out of both money and LSD. He decided to set up another lab. But he had earlier agreed with the Grateful Dead that he would not work in a lab while traveling or living with them. Also, by then the band had reluctantly decided that the new improved electronic gear he had supplied them with had become a ‘logistical nightmare’ in terms of setting up and dismantling at every gig. Owsley sold the new equipment, bought the band new Fender amps and speakers, and then went off to work in his lab in Point Richmond.

Heat

On January 22, 1966 Kesey fled to Mexico to avoid a six-month prison sentence for possession of marijuana. In his absence, the Pranksters were led by Ken Babbs. The Californian Acid Tests ended in October 1966, when new legislation was enacted. The Drug Abuse Control Act of 1965 passed by the United States Congress had empowered the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare to designate LSD as a controlled substance, requiring licensing for sales and distribution. Although this new federal law allowed possession for personal consumption, the California State Senate clamped down further. Senator Donald Grunsky got a bill through which made possession of LSD a misdemeanor punishable by a maximum fine of $1,000 or a year in jail, and made manufacture and possession for sale a felony punishable by one to five years in prison. By October 1966, Nevada and New York had enacted similar legislation. Other states would soon follow.

In 1968 the United States Congress modified the Drug Abuse Control Amendments to make possession a misdemeanour and sale and manufacture a felony throughout the USA. The Bureau of Drug Abuse Control (BDAC) was formed in February 1966 as a part of the United States Food and Drug Administration. In 1968, the BDAC was merged with the Federal Bureau of Narcotics to form the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs (BNDD), forerunner of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), which was established in July 1973.

Bear Stanley was undeterred by the New Prohibition, as was Scully, who wanted more than anything to work with him in making

LSD. Scully's wish was soon granted. In July 1966, Bear and Melissa Cargill set up a laboratory in Point Richmond, California. Tim Scully and his friend Don Douglas joined them there later that summer. Owsley had got as far as making a very pure crystal LSD, and obtained new equipment for tableting it. This became known as 'White Lightning'. With Scully he succeeded in creating about 100 grams of LSD which made about 300,000 white lightning 300 µg tablets in addition to some handmade tablet triturates.The laboratory was also used to make DMT (N,N-Dimethyltryptamine), a synthetic version of a resinous South American tree bark with hallucinogenic properties.*

Bear, having produced such a large run of LSD, was ready for a break, but Scully was keen to continue the work. Scully collected the material and equipment for a prospective new lab from various companies in the San Francisco area which Bear had recommended. Unknown to Scully however, the Bay Area BDAC had been asking local companies who supplied chemicals that might be used for LSD production to alert them to anyone ordering such materials. On December 8, 1966 Scully called at a Bay Area chemical firm, to collect some chemicals he had ordered. The man at the sales-desk helped load the purchases into his truck. Scully then walked home, leaving his colleague, Don Douglas, to drive away the truck. Douglas, as he drove off, noticed that the sales-desk man jumped into a car and began following him.

Knowing they had a surveillance tail caused some soul-searching, but Scully and Douglas decided that the BDAC agents were unlikely to act unless they were led to a laboratory; and as yet, there wasn't one. But, shortly before Christmas 1966, Scully rented a house at 4210 East 26th Ave, near Denver City Park, to accommodate his first laboratory. As a cover story, he told the owner of the property that he was doing work in the basement with radio isotopes on a government licence which required special security.

In preparation for getting the Denver lab operational, the two chemists continued to gather equipment and chemicals in California, and did so under the eyes of the BDAC agents, to whom they would

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* Tendler and May, p.34.

cheekily wave to in the street. Finally, on January 19, 1967 the truck was loaded up for the thousand-mile journey to Denver, Colorado. Scully and Douglas, having observed the tailing-techniques of the BDAC for some weeks, implemented a plan to shake off the surveillance. In the side streets of San Jose they succeeded in losing their BDAC tail and drove the truck to Denver.

Once the Denver facilities were in place Scully returned to San Francisco to collect a consignment of Bear Stanley's lysergic acid. Bear however, had forgotten the false name he used for the Arizona safety deposit box in which he had stashed it. He did not admit his memory lapse; instead he told Scully that, given the heat he and Don Douglas had encountered when gathering chemicals and equipment, his 'intuition' told him to leave LSD production aside for the moment. In early 1967, chemist Sasha Shulgin had given Bear Stanley a small sample of STP (STP-2,5-Dimethoxy-4-methylamphetamine) and a sketchy outline of the synthesis for making it. Bear insisted that Scully try to work out the process for making STP – which was still legal – from Shulgin's sketchy notes and paid for the chemicals and equipment.

Bear, while visiting New York in the fall of 1966, had met Nick Sand, who was cooking DMT there in a lab. Sand was born in 1941, the son of New York communists Clarence Hiskey and Marcia Sand. During World War II, Clarence worked as a chemist on the Manhattan project, but was dismissed in 1944 after army counter-intelligence observed him meeting a known Soviet spy named Arthur Adams. In 1948 Clarence and Marcia were called before the House Committee on Un-American Activities, but refused to testify about their friends. They were both cited for contempt, which cost Clarence his job at Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute. In 1953, Clarence was subpoenaed to testify before a closed session of the Senate Subcommittee on Investigations, in which he was interrogated by Senator Joseph McCarthy and Donald Trump's future lawyer, Roy Cohn. Due to lack of evidence, neither Clarence nor Marcia were prosecuted.

Nick didn't inherit his parents' politics but he did inherit their rebellious, anti-establishment spirit and his father's interest in chemistry. Nick enrolled at Brooklyn College night school to study sociology and anthropology in 1962 and graduated in 1966. During

this period he taught himself chemistry and founded Bell Perfume Labs as a front for manufacturing DMT. In 1964, Sand met Richard Alpert at a lecture at Brooklyn College and turned him on to DMT. Alpert in return invited Sand to visit Millbrook and experience his first LSD trip. Alpert also introduced Sand to the writings of the Armenian mystical philosopher, George Gurdjieff, which profoundly influenced his thinking. Sand recruited former UC Berkeley organic chemistry student David Mantell to work at Bell Perfume Lab on purifying DMT and DET (diethyltryptamine). In September of 1966, Timothy Leary ceremoniously 'appointed' Sand as alchemist for the League for Spiritual Discovery and signed a document instructing law enforcement officials not to impede his work.

Sand, unlike Scully, treated the venture as a profit-making business. Sand, nonetheless, was an idealist, if also a fanatic. He recalled that during a pioneering trip, '... suddenly a voice came through my body that said your job on this planet is to make psychedelics and turn on the world. It was very interesting'.* Sand, Scully, Bear Stanley and their psychedelic co-thinkers were deeply concerned with the immediate threat of global thermo-nuclear confrontation and with the Vietnam War. Scully recalls:

> 'When I was working with Bear, he and I took an acid trip with Richard Alpert one day in 1967 where we were planning the strategy of turning on the world, modest as we were, and one of the things we agreed on was that if we just turned on the United States it would be like unilateral disarmament. We really had to make sure that every country in the world got turned on, particularly those behind the Iron Curtain, or else it would be a very bad thing geopolitically. And so we talked to the Brotherhood [his later colleagues, the Brotherhood of Eternal Love – see below] and they made an effort to spread it around the world. And they did get our LSD into Vietnam and behind the Iron Curtain and all over'.*

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* *The Sunshine Makers* (film documentary) 2015 (New York) Director: Cosmo Feilding-Mellen

* Tim Scully interviewed by Angela Chen, *The Verge*, January 26, 2017.

Nick Sand recalled of himself:

> 'I was considered as some sort of mad man psychedelic commando because I'd go anywhere, do anything... If we could turn on everyone in the world then maybe we'd have a new world of peace and love. We had the insane desire to risk our freedom and be what we thought were American patriots'.*

Tim Scully, for his part, favoured system-change. He was concerned about racial, economic and sexual inequality; laissez-faire capitalism; runaway environmental disasters; overpopulation; and more. He believed that if enough people took LSD they would be gentler with each other and with the environment, and less trusting of large organizations, including governments and large corporations.

Owsley suggested to Nick Sand that he move to California. In February 1967, Sand and David Mantell dismantled Bell Perfume Labs, packed the equipment into a used meat truck, and lit out for California with a plan to install it at a ranch in Cloverdale that Mantell rented. On April 3 their truck was pulled up by the police when Sand failed to stop at a weighing station in Dinosaur, Colorado. As Sand refused to pay a fine to the arresting officer, he and Mantell were jailed. A search of the truck yielded chemicals and laboratory equipment. The local sheriff's office and BDAC proudly announced they had discovered a 'mobile laboratory' with 20 lb. of 'LSD', valued initially at $336 million. But as the drug had only been partially processed, the estimate rapidly dropped to $1.5 million. Also, as the search had been carried out without a warrant it was later ruled to have been unlawful; charges were dropped and the truck's contents were returned to Sand two years later. In a tragic accident which seems to have occurred just after Sand and Mantell left New York, Alan Bell of the Bell Perfume Lab died sleeping in an attic in New York when a candle fell over and ignited some decorative fabric hangings.

Finally Sand and Mantell arrived in San Francisco. Bear introduced Sand to Scully and asked Scully to tell Sand everything he had learned about making STP. Sand had lost his chemicals and lab

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* *Sunshine Makers*

equipment in the bust in Colorado, but he still had a good supply of Bear's White Lightning LSD stashed in New York, which he would sell during the 1967 Summer of Love. According to Tendler and May's book, *The Brotherhood*, at least some of this was distributed by the Hell's Angels in batches worth sales of $50,000 in exchange for $40,000.* Sand used the money he made from selling White Lightning to establish his D&H Custom Research lab in San Francisco, where he and Mantell made STP. To make STP he initially used small-scale table top glassware but soon scaled up his production so by early 1968 he was cooking larger batches of STP in a surplus 200-gallon stainless steel soup kettle.

Scully's Denver laboratory produced at least 2 lbs of STP before Bear finally remembered the name he had used for the safe deposit box containing his stash of lysergic acid. In the early autumn of 1967, production of LSD resumed. As distributors, Bear used the Oakland Hell's Angels motorcycle gang, who he had met through Ken Kesey. Profits from Bear's productions accumulated rapidly. On a trip to Millbrook, Bear was stopped near the estate by police who found a safe-deposit key for his money-stash in New York which was regularly topped by Melissa Cargill. Timothy Leary suggested to Bear that he turn to Billy Hitchcock for help. Hitchcock called Bill Sayad, a banker at Fiduciary Trust at Nassau in the Bahamas. Sayad flew to Manhattan to pick up the money and open the account for Bear, under the name 'Robin Goodfellow'. Tendler and May say that by winter of 1967 Bear had '$320,000 in safe deposit boxes around San Francisco' as well as $225,000 'moved abroad, courtesy of Billy Hitchcock'. †

In late September or early October 1967, Scully closed his first Denver lab. The BDAC never discovered it. Bear, having paid for all the raw material for the several hundred grams of acid produced there, stashed the whole product. He now wanted to get the LSD tableted and withdraw from LSD production. In October 1967, he told Scully, who was looking to establish another LSD lab, 'You're on your own'.

Unfortunately for Bear, the BDAC tracked a dealer who did tableting for him back to his tableting facility in Orinda, California.

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* Tendler and May, p.54.

† Tendler and May, ps. 48-50.

On December 21 1967, six BDAC agents broke down Bear's door. Five people, including Bear and Melissa Cargill, were arrested. The agents seized 67.58 grams of LSD, and 161 grams of STP (which was still legal), plus laboratory equipment. The police were less than thorough in their search, and Bear got some of his Hell's Angels contacts to go in and recover items the police had missed. He also sold the Hell's Angels some of the LSD he had stashed well away from his Orinda facility. Bear resumed working for the Grateful Dead as their sound engineer until the case came to court in September 1969, and the Orinda defendants were convicted and given three consecutive one-year sentences. Bear Stanley would be confined to a federal prison from 1970 to 1972.

Scully needed investment money to obtain enough raw materials to set up another lab. Bear suggested he try Billy Hitchcock, newly ensconced at a retreat in Sausalito, California. The authors of both *Acid Dreams* and *The Brotherhood* claim that Hitchcock only agreed to loan Scully the money to restart LSD production on condition that he dropped a plan to give the product away free. It is true that in October 1967 Scully asked Hitchcock to finance the production and free distribution of enough LSD (about 200kg) for everyone in the world who wanted it to try it. Hitchcock did not feel able to finance the plan, because he didn't have enough cash to do so (much of his money was tied up in a trust); and because he believed that people would not value something they didn't have to pay for. Scully recalls 'he did loan me a small amount of money ($11,000) at 300% interest to help finance the next lab. But he was in no way "Mr. Big" and he didn't dictate any terms to me or anyone else for making LSD'.

Nick Sand and Tim Scully searched for European sources of lysergic acid and ergot alkaloids. During the years in which it was still legal to do so, Englishman Michael Druce had supplied the Millbrook fraternity with LSD by mail-order through Michael O'Dwyer Ltd, a small chemical company based in Hampshire, England, in which he held a majority share. After the Swiss Sandoz company restricted sales to the U.S. in 1962, Druce imported LSD from the Czechoslovakian state-owned pharmaceutical firm, Chemapol, via its export wing, Exico. The Czechs, no longer bothered by the expired Sandoz patent, were producing LSD in 1 milligram vials for small

orders or in 100-milligram ampoules of powder for bulk purchases. During this period, Druce's future partner, Ronald Craze, was handling Exico's business in London. After use of LSD was made illegal in Britain, Druce stopped exporting it. But, his prospective American customers wondered, would he be prepared to procure and export raw materials and specialist lab equipment for LSD production, if the end-users were beyond British jurisdiction? Hitchcock suggested to Tim Scully that Druce might be amenable to such an idea. As it turned out, he was.

Druce and Craze were established commodity brokers and traders, storing merchandise against price rises until it could be sold on at a profit. Specialising in chemicals, they could – unlike Sand and Scully – approach producers direct. Scully, with Donald Munson, an expert organiser of smuggling operations, arranged to get the chemicals to the United States. Scully, with the money supplied by Billy Hitchcock, was able to make his first purchases Druce in late January 1968. Scully paid Druce $9,000 for 2.8 kilos of ergotamine tartrate, which was sent to the United States, mis-labelled as 'CQ equipment for gas chromatography' to fool the customs, and picked up at a chemical firm in South Carolina, by someone on behalf of 'Tim Philips', the name Scully used in London.* At same time Druce supplied Scully with 250 grams of lysergic acid. This was sent to the US via a courier, Ayman de Sales, who smuggled it to Montréal and then to New York. However, when Scully tried to use the lysergic acid to make LSD he found it was bogus – about as useful as talcum powder. Scully appealed to Druce for a replacement. A few weeks later Druce managed to locate a kilo of the real thing real and offered it to Scully for the cost of three quarters of a kilo. As Scully didn't have the money to pay for it he shared the kilo with Nick Sand. Sand who bought 500 grams and Scully got a good deal in paying for 250 grams and getting 500. When Sand and Scully went to collect the kilo of lysergic acid from Druce in England, Scully brought along for good measure a melting point tester which could verify that the product was sound. Some of the consignment was stashed in a Zürich safe deposit

* Tendler and May, p.53.

box; and some was concealed in a teddy bear which Scully mailed to his mother's address in the US.

In February 1968 Tim Scully, with assistants Rory Condon and Ruth Pahkala, opened a second Denver lab at 1050 South Elmira Street. The house was rented by Condon under an alias. In the LSD purification process, Scully was able to demonstrate a phenomenon known as 'piezoluminescence', which had been worked out by Owsley on a small-scale. In piezoluminescence, LSD crystals are so pure that they give off flashes of light when shaken, stirred or crushed.

In the spring of 1968, Scully, using the ergotamine tartrate he had bought from Druce, made about 20 grams of LSD in his second Denver lab and made an arrangement with Sand to have it tableted. Scully believes that Sand sold some of it to the Brotherhood of Eternal Love for distribution. In June, Scully took a trip from Denver to San Francisco. Unfortunately, while he was gone the grass on his lawn began to turn dry yellow. The house, being in a suburb where city water was not yet available, had its own well and septic tank; but the well pump failed and the grass couldn't be watered. The neighbours, who liked everyone in the street to keep up appearances with nice green lawns, were becoming restless and curious. Scully's two assistants flew to San Francisco to report the problem. Scully told them to return and get the pump fixed. But before they got back their landlord, a Mr Chance, was out and about looking over the various properties he owned in the neighbourhood when he noticed that the lawn had turned brown. Mr Chance walked round the empty property and noticed a very bad smell, which he feared was emanating from a dead body. He called the police, who broke in and traced the smell to spilt chemicals in the basement. The next day, police scientists identified small samples of very high-quality LSD left there.

In San Francisco, Scully, after hearing nothing from his assistants about the problem with the lawn, telephoned his Denver lab. When a voice answered 'Scully residence', he knew immediately it had been raided, because he could only have been identified from documents lying around bearing his real name. As Scully didn't know where his assistants were he couldn't warn them to stay away, although he hoped reports of the raid in the local press might have alerted them. But four days after the laboratory had been discovered, Condon and Pakhula returned, blissfully unaware of what had

happened, and were arrested. Scully, having escaped arrest, lost all his lab equipment. However, the raw materials he and Nick Sand had bought from Druce and Craze were not captured in the bust; and Scully still had some chemicals he had ordered through Nick's company, D&H Custom Research. Nick Sand eventually agreed to finance setting up a new lab for making LSD in return for Tim Scully teaching him the process he had learned from Owsley Stanley.

In late June 1968, days after Scully's second Denver lab was busted on June 23, Michael Druce and Ronald Craze flew to California, where they stayed at Hitchcock's house in Sausalito. Craze wanted investment money to establish a firm to provide livestock feeds for developing countries by means of new production methods. In his memoirs Craze insists that he genuinely believed that the new business – called 'Alban Feeds' – would be legally above board. Druce had convinced him that supplying the materials Sand and Scully wanted would provide the economic basis for developing the livestock feeds business. Nick Sand met the two Englishmen at the airport in San Francisco and showed them the 'scene'. Michael Druce, for all his front as a straight businessman, was familiar with the ways of the Millbrook fraternity. He even occasionally indulged in psychedelic drugs. In contrast, Ronald Craze was thoroughly unfamiliar with the scene and found the psychedelic fraternity to be utterly bizarre. When Timothy Leary offered him a joint at a party, Craze had no idea what it was, and embarrassed himself by opening his cigarette packet and saying 'Oh, have one of mine!'

Sand did the negotiating with Druce and Craze during their visit. Having made a packet from making and selling STP, it was Sand who provided the money. Hitchcock invested in Alban Feeds acting as Sand's nominee. A third of the money Druce and Craze received from Sand was for investment in Alban Feeds – in the form of a convertible debenture – while the other two thirds was a down payment on a shipment of ergotamine tartrate and lysergic acid.

On returning to England, Druce and Craze persuaded an animal feeds expert, Michael Faulkner-Jones, to come onboard with the new company. Albans Feeds opened a new office in Dunstable, Bedfordshire, and produced an impressive-looking catalogue of animal feeds products. This business model consisted of one company

developing animal feeds and another dealing in ‘specialist chemicals’; with the two companies interrelated through holdings.

Druze and Craze were paid for their services via the Americans’ new banking facilities. Billy Hitchcock had enjoyed a successful run as broker in American stocks for the Fiduciary Bank and Trust Company. When Fiduciary stopped trading in stocks as a result of a consent decree with the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Hitchcock made a new arrangement with the Paravicini Bank in Switzerland. This cautious move also provided an extra arm’s length for the purchase of laboratory facilities; any attempt by US Federal agents to track the cash-flow of their targets would come up against the Swiss banking fraternity’s uncompromising defence of ‘confidentiality’. Hitchcock convinced both Owsley and Sand to transfer the money they had stashed off-shore in the Bahamas to the Paravicini bank so he could profitably play the stock market – with both his money and theirs.

On August 30 1968, $32,000 was transferred from the Paravicini bank to a London bank for Alban Feeds. Then Hitchcock had $100,000 of Sand’s money transferred from the Paravicini bank to the another Swiss bank, the Vontobel. In early September, Sand passed the $100,000 on to Druce’s bank in London as payment for the lysergic acid.

In 1968, Sand’s relationship with his Hell’s Angels distributors rapidly deteriorated. Having successfully sold his stash of White Lightning during the 1967 Summer of Love, had gone on later that year to make STP at his new D&H Custom Research laboratory. In an attempt mislead the Hell’s Angels, Sand initially mislabelled his STP – which wasn’t a well-known psychedelic brand – as LSD. When a delivery to the Hell’s Angels of 12,000 doses of STP was found to have been spoiled by moisture in storage, Angels’ leader Terry ‘The Tramp’ Tracey and his assistant, George Wethern, drove the seventy-five miles from San Francisco to Nick Sand’s Cloverdale ranch. They shot at the locks on the gate, went in and terrorised everyone staying there, including women and children, until Sand arrived to replace the spoiled STP. Sand’s relations with the Hell’s Angels went from bad to worse. When a rival dealer began undercutting the Angels in sales of STP, Wethern beat him up until he revealed that Sand had supplied him at a cheaper price than he was giving the Angels. Wethern also

learned that Sand had been diverting the lithium aluminum hydride the Angels had obtained for him to make DMT into his highly profitable STP production. Wethern and a team of henchman took Sand to a cemetery and pistol-whipped him.

George Wethern was dangerous thug in more ways than one. On a ranch he later bought in Mendocino County there were some abandoned water wells which the Hell's Angels used to dump the bodies of people they had murdered. Later, in 1973, Wethern became a government informer and he eventually testified as a government witness against Nick Sand.

Scully had never harboured illusions that taking LSD would make the Oakland Hell's Angels less violent, hedonistic and money-grabbing than they were. He had never been happy about Bear's dealings with them, knowing that they also distributed heroin and methedrine. One of the reasons Scully wanted to give LSD away for free was because distributors like the Hell's Angels were putting LSD into the same distribution channels as hard drugs and thus exposing young acid freaks to the risk of getting addicted and falling into their clutches. Now working independently of Bear Stanley, Scully turned to Billy Hitchcock for advice on finding an alternative distribution channel. Billy suggested Scully ask the Brotherhood of Eternal Love.

The Brotherhood of Eternal Love

In 1966, in California, John Griggs, leader of a hoodlum gang from Anaheim, read a newspaper article about a Dr Timothy Leary, who was supplying Harvard professors, movie stars and writers with a new legal 'wonder drug' called LSD. Griggs felt resentful. He figured why should plebs like himself have to risk imprisonment scoring weed and heroin when the elite were getting much higher with impunity, on something that was unavailable in the dope underground? When Griggs discovered that a local Hollywood film producer was hosting LSD parties, he organised an armed raid on his house. Griggs and two accomplices – Tommy Tunnell and Joe Buffalo – donned ski masks, barged into a party that was in full swing, brandished their weapons and demanded acid. The film producer, relieved that the gang didn't want anything in the house except LSD, shouted 'Have a good trip

guys!' as they roared off on their motorcycles into the night with a stash of his LSD.

Soon, Griggs and his friends were dancing on the beach, shouting 'This is it! Thank you God!', and throwing their guns into the sea. Days later, Griggs had a near-death experience when he was hospitalised with hepatitis he had contracted through his heroin addiction. He immediately gave up heroin and put his epiphany down to the 'ego-death' experience he'd had with LSD. Griggs ordered Leary's publications on how to program LSD trips and began to hold weekly group sessions, usually in the mountains or on the beach. Soon they drew in hundreds of local surfers and bikers, who adopted the group's motto: 'Stay High and Love God'.*

After Griggs read Leary's book, *Start Your Own Religion,* he travelled east to meet the author at the Millbrook retreat. Griggs impressed Leary as a proselytiser. 'He had this charisma, energy, that sparkle in his eye', Leary recalled. In Brotherhood member Travis Ashbrook's assessment of Leary's relationship to Griggs,

> 'A lot of people thought John was a acolyte of Timothy Leary, but Tim told me that he considered John to be his guru. But it's true that Timothy was inspiring us in an important way. He was college professor, someone in our parents' generation, and he was telling us we were doing the right thing when he said "tune in, turn on and drop out." There is a lot of self-doubt when you are doing something as far out as what we were doing, and Tim came along to tell us not to doubt it anymore'.†

Days after the anti-LSD legislation in California in October 1966, the Brotherhood of Eternal Love registered as a tax-exempt religious church, dedicated to upholding the 'sacred right of each individual to commune with God in spirit and in truth as it is empirically revealed to him', and bringing to the world 'a greater awareness of God through the teachings of Jesus Christ, Buddha, Ramakrishna, Babaji, Paramahansa Yogananda, Mahatma Ghandi, and all true prophets…' The paperwork for incorporating the group as a legally registered non-

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* Nicholas Schou, *Orange Sunshine*, ps.21-30,

† Ibid.pp.49-50.

profit organisation was filed by Glenn Lynd, as he was the only member who didn't have a criminal record. *

The Brotherhood set up a store-front in Laguna Beach, named Mystic Arts World, adorned with paintings by Dion Wright, the group's artist-in-residence. The venture did good business, selling records, books, clothes and drugs paraphernalia to the local head community. Behind the business front of Mystic Arts World, the Brotherhood was developing a well-organised drug smuggling and distribution business. The Brotherhood ran marijuana across the Mexican border and bought Owsley-made LSD from the Hells Angels in San Francisco. On a trip to Afghanistan in search of hash, Travis Ashbrook and Ron Bevan met with Nazrullah Tokhi in Kandahar. Nazrullah and his two brothers Hayatullah and Amanullah, who helped establish the Brotherhood as the biggest hash-smuggling operation in North America; with tons of hash concealed in cars and mobile homes blending in with the eastward migration of young long-haired travellers along the Hippie Trail.†

Ultimately, the dealing was intended to finance the move to a secluded place, far from the maddening crowd and the Feds, where the Brotherhood's life-style dreams could be realised. One inspiration was Aldous Huxley's utopian novel, *Island*. The community on Huxley's imagined Polynesian island blends certain elements of western science and eastern Buddhism to develop a technology that works with nature rather than against it. Tantric sex – the 'yoga of love' – is taught and practiced. The family unit is extended by communal child-rearing. For some, this utopian dream actually seemed like a practical option – if the alternative was long-term incarceration at San Quintin. Brother Edward Padilla recalled, 'The idea of moving to an island was as serious as a heart attack. We were going to buy a yacht, a big boat and sail there. We were talking about how to deliver babies, how to plant seeds, what to grow'. Brother Jack Harrington had even flown to Micronesia to check out an island he had heard about. But in spring 1968, John Griggs, on his own initiative, made a down payment on a

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* Leary, *Flashbacks*, Chapter 32; Lee and Shlain, p237; Schou, *Orange Sunshine* ,ps. 21-22, 50-51.

† Schou,pp.70, 71, 88, 123.

300-acre piece of land in the mountains above Palm Springs.* Though it was not on an island, it was secluded. Nicholas Schou's book, Orange Sunshine, gives the impression that Griggs' move was seen by disgruntled comrades as something of a betrayal of the group's ideals. Tim Scully disagrees:

> 'I'm not convinced that all the Brotherhood shared the same dream of an island. My impression is that the Brotherhood was a large enough group that there were subgroups with different dreams. Each of those groups may have thought their dream was everyone's dream but that was an illusion. At the time when the LSD subsystem led by John Griggs bought the Brotherhood ranch, another subgroup decided to move to Oregon and a third group moved to Hawaii. Each group followed their own dream. My point is that it was more complicated than the people that Nick Schou interviewed made it sound.'

Although Bear Stanley had a low opinion of the Brotherhood, Tim Scully begged to differ; having met John Griggs at Billy Hitchcock's house in Sausalito, he had been very impressed by him. To Scully, the Brotherhood of Eternal Love (at least in their determination to disseminate LSD as a social good) had a philosophy which was genuinely spiritual and non-violent.

Being idealists didn't stop the Brotherhood from building up one of the most successful drug-smuggling operations in the world. In the summer of 1968, John Griggs and Michael Randall of the Brotherhood visited Hitchcock in Sausalito. The Brotherhood, says Scully, 'were having trouble getting as much as they wanted to distribute, so when I came and said, "I'd like you to distribute the LSD I make," they were very happy'.*

Tim Scully's collaboration with Nick Sand led in November 1968 to the establishment of an LSD lab in Windsor, near Santa Rosa, California. In this new partnership Scully insisted that both Sand and he would sell everything they made at Windsor through the

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* Ibid.pp.143-44.

* Tim Scully interviewed by Angela Chen, *The Verge*, January 26, 2017.

Brotherhood, and not the Hell's Angels. STP production was dropped; Scully was having moral scruples about putting it on the streets. In 1967 the negative effects of STP became apparent when people suffering extreme panic attacks were admitted to the Haight-Ashbury Medical Clinic and the San Francisco General Hospital. The Haight-Ashbury Clinic was quick to warn the local freak community that overdosing STP could cause psychosis and an 'acute chronic and toxic reaction' lasting for up to 24 hours.* Scully says, 'Owsley Stanley talked me into making some STP. I don't feel good about having done that; STP turned out not to be a good psychedelic'. He adds that STP 'lacked heart. It did not lead to experiences of oneness the way that LSD often did. And quite a few people had terrifying experiences until they learned how to correctly use the drug'. Scully's priorities were to get money for the legal fees of his two lab assistants who had been busted in Denver lab, and to buy more raw materials. His ultimate ambition was still to make 200 kilos of acid – enough for several hundred million good doses – and give it away to help change consciousness on a global scale. As he says now, 'That latter fantasy did not happen'.

Sand brought on board Professor Lester Friedman, of Case Western University, Missouri, to train him in advanced production techniques in return for a lucrative 'research grant' plus a stake in the front companies being set up in Europe for procurement of materials.

Money Matters

In the fiscal paradise of the Bahamas, Billy Hitchcock had a private account at the Castle Bank and Trust. This laundromat for Mafia narcotics trafficking had been co-founded by Edward Halliwell, a CIA asset whose air transport company had flown heroin to bankroll covert operations in the Golden Triangle and Indo-China. Hitchcock also made arrangements at Resorts International, another Bahamas-based conduit for Mafia money, and at the Fiduciary Trust Company, an offshoot of Investors Overseas Services (IOS). Headquartered in Geneva, IOS was headed by the notorious and crooked financier,

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* David E Smith, unpublished paper, *The Psychotomimetic Amphetamines with Special Reference to STP (DOM) Toxicity.*

Bernie Cornfeld (user of the slogan 'Do you sincerely want to be rich?'). Hitchcock, who spent some time in London, may have learned some of the dark arts of finance from Cornfeld himself. As an investment advisor, Hitchcock certainly learned about the attraction overseas trusts had for wealthy people trying to dodge taxes without breaking the law. As Alan Block and Sean Griffin put in an article in the *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice:*

> 'He (the taxpayer) puts money in a Bahama central trust. Why in the Bahamas? There is no income tax or estate tax in the Bahamas. Why in a trust? A trust is like a corporation, a separate legal entity. This separate entity is a non-resident alien, and a non-resident alien can sell an asset in the United States with no tax. How delightful! Now, if that non-resident alien ties in with a distributing company in the Netherlands Antilles, which can earn interest in the United States without a tax under any circumstances, he has put together a perfect set-up. He takes losses and deductions in the United States and he takes gains and profits abroad, under a tax treaty'.*.

Sand and Scully's San Francisco lawyer, Peter Buchanan, handled the details of purchasing property for the laboratory established in Windsor, in November 1968. Buchanan attempted to hide the source of the money by buying cashier's checks with cash and depositing them at New York banks in his law firm's trust account. As a means of covering up real estate purchase and avoiding taxes, this, as we shall see, proved to be ineffective.

Orange Sunshine

Sand and Scully's Windsor lab produced well over a kilogram of LSD; enough for more than 4 million 300 µg doses. Nick Sand tableted the LSD in small orange tablets which eventually became known as Orange Sunshine. Sand's pregnant partner, Jill Henry,

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* Alan A Block and Sean P Griffin, 'Build it, and they will Come: Narcotics and Money Laundering in the Leeward Islands.' *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice,* Vol. 15 issue 4.

worked with him and David Mantell until late May of 1969, when she gave birth to a daughter.

On May 26, 1969, Tim Scully, having just learned to fly, was arrested as he walked into a hangar at Napa County Airport, California, where a piece of radio navigation equipment was being installed on his airplane. He was taken to the Federal Building in San Francisco where investigators quizzed him on incriminating evidence found in the bust of his second Denver laboratory the previous year. Scully refused to answer his interrogators questions without the presence of his lawyer and was released on bail. Sand, on learning of Scully's arrest, was unsure how much the feds knew. So not wanting to take any chances, Sand closed the Windsor lab. In the fall of 1969, Sand set up the Tekton Development Company in San Francisco to obtain lab equipment.

When the Brotherhood of Eternal Love first moved into the ranch at Idyllwild in spring 1968, it had toolsheds, tractors, a windmill for drawing water from the well, diesel generators and a corral full of cattle. Dion Wright, a frequent visitor, noticed that what had once been a fully functioning ranch had strangely become a primitive camp: most of the inhabitants were living in teepees and since they didn't eat meat the cattle had been given away to local ranchers. Glenn Lynd, as quoted in Nicholas Schou's book, *Orange Sunshine,* says he expressed concerns about group-marriage arrangements inspired by Huxley's *Island,* which he claimed Griggs appeared to be enforcing in the name of free love.* Lynd's account however, may have been coloured by his later status as a government informer, i.e. it may have been a bit of self-justification for snitching. Tim Scully is adamant that Lynd's claim that the people living on the Brotherhood Ranch practiced free love is 'utterly untrue'. He says: 'At that time it was very common for most of us in the Psychedelic scene to practice free love and it was relatively unusual that the people living on the Brotherhood Ranch practiced monogamy. But they did so. Carol Griggs was a strong force in insisting for monogamy on the ranch'.*

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* Schou,pp.150-3

* Scully to Black, Feb 2020.

On 4 August 1969 the Idyllwid community was shattered by the sudden death of John Griggs from a drug overdose. According to Lee and Shlain's account, in *Acid Dreams*, Griggs' demise in a teepee at Idyllwild was due to an overdose of PCP (Phencyclidine: also known as 'Angel Dust'). During the 1967 'Summer of Love' in San Francisco, large amounts of PCP had been suddenly touted as synthetic cannabis (tetra-hydro-cannibinol – THC) amongst the Haight Ashbury hippies. PCP, which had been tested on soldiers at Edgewood Arsenal, was stockpiled by the CIA as a 'non-lethal incapacitant' even though agents reported that high doses could 'lead to convulsions and death'. In Leary's version, in *Flashbacks*, the fatal dose was of a synthetic concoction of psilocybin Griggs had bought from an underground chemist in Los Angeles. Leary claimed that laboratory tests had revealed the pills contained strychnine and that during this period there were many reports of psychedelics laced with poisons circulating in the counter-culture. According to Leary, rumours spread 'about federal drug enforcement agents circulating tainted drugs, but there was no proof'.* According to Dion Wright,

> 'The role of the intelligence community is unclear, but they were undoubtedly some kind of factor. Certainly the density of agents from various levels of government was more than anyone perceived at that time. I have come down on the side of a government assassination that worked'.*

The authors of *Acid Dreams* seem to imply that Griggs' death was suspicious. They write: 'In the aftermath of Grigg's death there was shakeup in the Brotherhood hierarchy. A different breed took over, and their approach to dealing was more competitive and cutthroat than before'. But, as we shall see, there is no real evidence of a 'different breed' taking over at this time (summer 1969). According to Tendler and May's account in their book, *The Brotherhood*, Griggs died because he simply miscalculated a dose of psilocybin mushroom pills.† Tim Scully, who obtained Griggs' death certificate and talked

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* Leary, *Flashbacks*, p.285

* Schou, p.192.

† Tendler and May, p.72.

with the people who were with him when he died, say that is precisely what happened:

> ‘He died after aspirating vomit on the way to the hospital lying down in the back of a pickup truck where his friends didn't know enough first aid to keep his airway open after he took a very large dose of synthetic psilocybin which came from Switzerland and which was pure. A contributing factor to John's death was his propensity to be macho about taking extremely large doses of drugs, something many of the Brotherhood guys did. You can get away with that with LSD since very large doses are still not physically toxic but that habit becomes very dangerous when applied to other drugs such as psilocybin’.

After John Griggs’ death Michael Randall took over the Brotherhood’s LSD distribution system and married Griggs' widow. The Brotherhood carried on. Those who were part of the Brotherhood’s ‘LSD wing’ were about to encounter their counterparts on the other side of the Atlantic.

7 - The Atlantic Acid Alliance

Richard Kemp – Liverpool's LSD Chemist

In the autumn of 1968, a student who was researching THC production for David Solomon turned for help to his old university friend, Richard Kemp. Born in 1943 to working-class parents in Liverpool, Kemp won a scholarship to a public school and went on to study science at St Andrews University in Scotland. After transferring to Liverpool University in 1965 he met the love of his life, medical student Christine Bott. After graduating he took up research work at the university, where he excelled. At his university friend's invitation, Kemp travelled from Liverpool to Cambridge and was introduced to David Solomon, who was at the time well-known for his books, such as *LSD: The Consciousness-Expanding Drug* and *The Marijuana Papers (*1966). Solomon told Kemp of his plans for imanufacturing and marketing THC, which was still legal. As Kemp had access to university laboratories and had his own makeshift lab at his parents' home in Liverpool, Solomon suggested that Kemp try his hand at making THC. Kemp gave the idea serious consideration but soon found he couldn't do it because he lacked the necessary ingredients and equipment. Solomon came up with another idea: in order to properly finance the THC project and get the raw materials, why not in the meantime try making LSD to sell?*

Solomon, it turned out, had access to the ingredients for making acid. One source was Millbrook veteran, Paul Arnaboldi, who sent Solomon 40 grams of ergotamine tartrate hidden in a rolled-up magazine to the American Express Haymarket office in London. Solomon also had sources of supply in West Germany which he accessed using a pseudonym. In Liverpool Kemp went ahead and produced some dark syrupy acid which, though not of the best quality, was effective and good enough to sell. Solomon had told Kemp that the effects of dropping acid were similar to smoking pot, only much

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* Tendler and May, ps.80-81.

stronger.* But when Kemp accidentally ingested a massive dose after he spilled a flask of his home-made acid, he went on a trip which blew away his academic ambitions – a doctorate in 'nuclear magnetic resonance of fluorinated molecules' – and turned him into a psychedelic revolutionary.†

Meanwhile in Paris, in May 1969, an American friend of Solomon who was studying at Cambridge in England (name unknown) ran into fellow American Ronald Stark on the streets of Paris (during 'riots', according to Tendler and May). They got talking about Solomon and his books on psychedelics, which Stark might well have been familiar with. The American student passed on Solomon's address to Stark; and in the summer of 1969 Stark arrived at Grantchester Meadows and introduced himself to Solomon.‡

In their conversations, Solomon fell under Stark's spell and told him about Kemp's promising work. At Stark's request, Solomon invited Kemp to meet 'a man with a million dollar inheritance'. As Stark had convinced the management of the Oxford and Cambridge Club on Pall Mall that he had been to Harvard and thus qualified for membership a meeting was convened there to discuss the logistics of LSD manufacture. Present were: Ronald Stark; Richard Kemp; David Solomon; Paul Arnaboldi and Stark's Scottish assistant, Simon Walton. At Christmas 1969, Stark and Kemp took a trip to Morocco where they drew up a contract of employment for Kemp to work at a laboratory tucked away on the premises of the PACS chemical company in Paris on the 13th Arrondissement. In the first production run, Kemp created a kilo of LSD for export to the USA. He discovered that freezing the solution could greatly speed up the purification process, although as a shortcut the freezing produced a slightly less-than-pure batch of LSD. A least half of this run would find its way to the Brotherhood of Love in California.

Detective Richard Lee of Operation Julie later noted, 'In May 1970 [Kemp] went to Switzerland with Stark and there met Nick Sand and Lester Friedman. They talked for four days about, among other

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* Lee and Shlain, p.246.

† Police files in Lee and Pratt, *Operation Julie*, Appendix,pp.371-378.

‡ Tendler and May, ps.79-82.

things, LSD'. Inspector Lee believed that this indicated a solid relationship between Kemp and the Brotherhood of Eternal Love; he simply did not believe Kemp's later denial that he knew anything about the Brotherhood.* However, when Tim Scully asked Nick Sand years later about his dealings with Kemp, Sand said that when Stark introduced him to Richard Kemp in Switzerland he only allowed the two of them to talk *very* briefly. This would suggest that Stark – who liked to compartmentalize his affairs – did not want Kemp to 'bond' with his own Brotherhood associates.

At the end of May 1970, Kemp and Simon Walton took the ferry from France to England in Stark's Ferrari 250-GT to buy an infra-red spectrometer from Michael Druce. Going through customs, they were pulled. When customs officers checked out Walton and discovered he had a heroin conviction, the car was searched, but the customs officers failed to see the significance of documents on the back seat relating to the purchase of a massive nine kilos of ergotamine tartrate.† Stark was furious; he regarded taking such sensitive and incriminating documents through customs as a careless breach in security. Stark had good reason to concerned about security. He was apparently warned that his Paris laboratory was in danger of being raided at the behest of the US authorities. The question is: who warned him? According to *Acid Dreams*:

> 'While pursuing his exploits as an LSD chemist, he communicated on a regular basis with American embassy personnel, and on numerous occasions he hinted at ties with the intelligence community. At one point he told an associate that he shut down his laboratory in France on a tip from the CIA'.‡

Inspector Richard Lee records that an informant he called 'Nancy' 'strongly suspected Stark was involved with the CIA and had friends in the American Embassy'.* Nancy had met Stark and a man she thought was called 'Bennerson' (possibly Stark's assistant, Tord

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* Tendler and May, p.80; Lee and Pratt, ps.352-353.

† Lee and Pratt, p.50.

‡ Lee and Shlain, p.286.

* Lee and Pratt ps. 335-7.

Svenson) through David Solomon. Suspicions about a possible CIA-connection were shared by Inspector Lee, who later learned of the discovery by Italian investigators that Stark had at least one friend (named as Charles Adams) in the US London embassy. Lee however, was unable to verify the CIA connection. Nor was 'Nancy' able to verify that Stark had been tipped off by the CIA. Lee writes:

> 'Nancy went on to say that something happened towards the end of 1970, details of which she did not know, but it resulted in one of the major Brotherhood figures visiting Stark and Kemp in France and telling them to close things down and cool it. The French operation ended then and Kemp returned to Britain.'

Tim Scully thinks that the 'warning' about an impending raid on his Paris laboratory came from Stark's US contacts in August 1970 after Scully had to abandon a truck carrying a tableting machine due to obvious surveillance (see chapter nine below). Scully says 'I think that the extreme heat around that machine caused him to close the Paris lab and move to Orleans'.

Stark, forewarned, transferred the laboratory work to Orleans, in the outhouses of a medicine firm. Contrary to Lee's account, Kemp did not immediately return to Britain following the closure of the Paris lab. At the Orleans lab, Kemp was assigned to work on Stark's project for a new synthesis of THC, which he hoped would be as strong as LSD and eventually as cheap to make. Kemp however, was not happy about doing all of the work in this dump of a workshop – 80 miles from Paris – while Stark and his friends were out having fun and adventures. Money promised to Kemp was not forthcoming; and to make matters even less bearable, Stark made clear his disapproval of visits by Christine Bott.

When Stark decided it was time for another run of LSD, Kemp raised the issue of his pay and conditions. Negotiations broke down; Kemp quit and returned to London with a severance pay in the form of 200 grams of LSD. Solomon, having recruited Kemp before passing him onto Stark, wanted a transfer fee of 250 grams of acid, less 20 percent to be paid to Paul Arnaboldi for supplying ergotamine tartrate. Solomon put his case during a meeting at Stark's favourite Chinese

restaurant in Soho, London. Stark at first exploded in outraged anger, then agreed.* Some were surprised by Stark's apparent generosity towards Solomon who, according to Steve Abrams, he could not stand. Abrams told me:

> 'I didn't know anything about a transfer fee for Dick Kemp. My understanding was that Stark had given Solomon 250 grams of acid to see whether it drove him mad. He'd been given instructions to get it pilled up and on the market at 5 bob a trip. Instead he was selling it at 5 bob a trip in lots of a thousand and it wasn't pilled up but put in caps for snorting'.

The acid did not cause Solomon to lose his sanity but it did seem to loosen his tongue. Reports soon reached Stark that Solomon was talking too much and in too many places. At the same time, the residents of Hilton Hall were growing nervous about Solomon's ongoing visits. Abrams said:

> 'I got the impression Solomon was hiding this huge quantity of acid in the Hilton Hall grounds, perhaps in the barn, or in a haystack. Solomon would arrive there and announce he was going out to the dovecot "to see Steve." He would appear there for five minutes and then start poking around in the out-buildings. I remember getting everyone in the fifth state of paranoia one night, and for an hour or two we were literally looking for a needle in a haystack… about a dozen of us were looking for acid in this haystack under lantern lights. We could have burned the whole place down. The point is Solomon was in this to make money, he was a danger and we told Stark to get rid of him. Solomon was horribly uncool, and everybody in Cambridge knew what he was doing. He'd actually come up to the car of anyone he knew and say 'Pssst! Want some acid?' So Stark said, ''Well you know, I could have him put in a block of cement''.'

Abrams tried to pacify Stark, telling him to 'do it the English way'. Stark asked what that was and Abrams – a fellow American but one

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* Tendler and May, ps.85, 92; Lee and Shlain, p.288.

who knew the local sensibilities better, having been resident for nearly ten years – replied: ‘The English would put some money in his bank account, buy him a house in the country, send him on a world tour for a vacation and never have anything to do with him again’. Stark summoned Solomon to a private meeting at Hilton Hall. Whatever Stark said in laying down the law, Solomon got the message and left the next day on a long trip to Tibet.

Tripping with RD Laing

Ronald Stark, during his time in London in the 1960s and early '70s took an interest in Dr Ronald D Laing’s work at the Tavistock Institute, some of which involved experimental treatment with LSD. When Laing began his career in mental hospitals in the fifties, he was appalled by the way schizophrenics were so casually subjected to insulin injections and lobotomy. He found that by listening to schizophrenics ‘talking to themselves’, he could begin to make sense of what they were saying within the existential context of their family relationships and their experience of mental hospitals, which were often perceived as scary, uncomprehending set-ups that served to increase the pressure to withdraw into a catatonic state. In Laing’s view, psychiatrists tended to operate as an elite police force employed to ‘punish’ by means of treatment those who society judged to be other than ‘normal’. Schizophrenia, as a psychosis, was all too often an ‘iatrogenic’ disease, i.e. caused by the cure.

In 1965 Laing, along with David Cooper and other colleagues, founded the Philadelphia Association, a charity concerned with the understanding and relief of mental illness. Laing got permission from the trustees of Kingsley Hall community centre in East London to put it to therapeutic use for people seriously affected by schizophrenia. In applying LSD in experimental therapy at Kingsley Hall, Laing began to see madness as a journey towards sanity. The LSD treatment suggested to him that the patient, freed of ego by the experience, could re-engage with a lost world of repressed childhood memories. In his book, the *Politics of Experience*, Laing argued that ‘we can no longer assume that such a voyage is an illness’; rather it was ‘itself a natural way of healing our own appalling state of alienation called normality’. Laing argued that people are socially conditioned to regard the

external experience of space and time as ‘normal and healthy’; the space explorer had become the modern hero; but for Laing it made far more sense to ‘explore the inner space of time and consciousness’ as a ‘desperately urgently required project for our time’.

Timothy Leary likewise believed that mental health institutions were designed to benefit those who ran them: ‘Like Communism and Christianity, psychoanalysis was a revered orthodoxy that brought respectability and fortune to an elite’. Leary, who met Laing in the US in 1964, said: ‘Ronnie Laing and I had much in common. His books on behaviour change harmonised with my work on interpersonal behaviour’. Back in 1958, Leary had resigned his directorship of the Kaiser Foundation at Oakland and his post at Columbia University over the methods of treating patients, which he found to be inhuman. Similarly, Laing, when he worked at the British Army Psychiatric Unit in Netley and later at Glasgow Royal Mental Hospital, encountered treatment methods he regarded as inhuman, such as insulin shock therapy and electroconvulsive therapy. Leary, however, was ‘dismayed’ by Laing’s belief that insanity was a creative resolution of emotional conflicts. In Leary’s view human evolution depended, ‘on finding and training the intelligent ones who will guide the species forward’.*

Leary was on the run when Ronald Stark approached Laing in late-1970. Steve Abrams recalled:

> ‘The Stark business culminated when I arranged for him to be analysed by Ronnie Laing. It was at Stark’s request. He was interested in what Laing would do with him and also what he could get out of Laing. So at a certain point Stark insisted on taking acid with Ronnie and Utta Laing. I think Utta took a small dose of 150 to 200 mics, Stark took a large dose of 300 or 500 and insisted that Laing take a huge dose, though actually even a large dose of acid just tends to start off the process. The three of them have this trip, and at the top of the trip Stark makes his pitch. I heard this from all three participants – from Ronnie, Utta and from Stark – they all told the same story: Stark said

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* Leary, *Flashbacks*, p.194.

> that Leary was on the run [see chapter ten below]. Leary's story was over and Leary wasn't the right chap; they wanted Laing to take over, not as hired help but as Boss. All the pharmaceutical companies, all the protected investments would come under his control. If he agreed he was now worth fifty million dollars and everybody worked for him, including Stark – that's the way Stark put it. Then to cap it off Stark said, "Look, respectfully Ronnie, what are your orders? " And Ronnie said to Stark, "Get the fuck out of my house!" He threw him bodily into the street as he was well known to do to people sometimes. Stark got into a taxi and went round to Glynne Webley-Everard's house where he met me. I remember him getting out of a taxi and saying "Ronnie's fucked my head". All I could tell was that he'd had acid with Ronnie, he was very, very stoned and didn't know what he was saying or doing'.

Stark had taken Laing on in a tripping contest and lost. Abrams was hospitable but he saw a chance to get Stark to open up. 'I pumped him for information,' he said. Stark explained that he wanted to make THC dimethylheptyl derivative. He had worked out eight of the fourteen stages of synthesis with a 90 per cent yield in each stage and wanted to make it by the kilo. He had costed it, in 1970 money, at £4,000 a kilo; but this was much too expensive for a commercial product. Stark thought it would be cheaper to extract it from the natural cannabis product rather than THC synthesis, but he reckoned he needed £800,000 to set up a production laboratory for it. He wanted to raise half a million dollars himself to get the project going and get someone else to front it for him. Stark said that the dimethylheptyl synthetic THC derivative had been made up at ETH Zürich (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology) for the Hoffman-Laroche pharmaceutical company. He had taken 250 µg of it and been heavily overdosed for 3 days. Abrams said 'I've heard many people challenge these premises about the immense power of dimethylheptyl and Stark is the only person I spoke to who claimed to have taken it'.

In his quest for a process of extracting the THC dimethylheptyl derivative from the natural cannabis plant Stark visited Afghanistan at least once in the early 1970s, at a time when brothers Aman and Nasrullah Tokhi were supplying the Brotherhood of Eternal Love with

large shipments of hash. Stark wanted the Tokhis to run a hash-oil facility he was trying to set up; and wanted the Brotherhood to put up half a million dollars to develop his dream project of turning Afghan cannabis into a hallucinogenic THC concoction which could be turned into crystals. Stark was also working on a minister in the Afghan government to set up a penicillin factory as a front.*

* Ibid. p.94.

8 - The British Microdot Gang and the Veritable Split

> 'If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is, Infinite. For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern'.
>
> William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*

In late 1970 Richard Kemp, having broken away from Ronald Stark, set about establishing acid production facilities in England. Inspector Richard Lee, commander of the later police investigation (Operation Julie) became convinced that despite Kemp's declaration of independence, his LSD production and distribution ring remained the 'British connection' of the Brotherhood of Eternal Love. Because the three North Americans involved with Kemp's operation — David Solomon, Paul Arnaboldi, and Gerry Thomas — had been associated with Timothy Leary's Millbrook centre, Lee regarded them as members 'of the inner circle of the Brotherhood'. For Lee, his findings implied that 'in the years between 1967 and 1972 the Brotherhood had set up the British connection through Druce and Craze in London [and] had financed Alban Feeds and Inland Alkaloids to supply ergotamine tartrate'. Also, he noted, 'major Brotherhood figures such as Stark, Sand and Hitchcock' who were regular visitors to Britain had been associated with Timothy Leary's Millbrook centre.*

Lee apparently saw the Brotherhood as a direct continuation of Leary's League of Spiritual discovery. Certainly, Brotherhood founder John Griggs had been a true believer in LSD ever since he and his gang stole their first stash from the movie producer in 1966. Griggs saw the mission of the Brotherhood as spreading LSD as a means to make a better world. The Brotherhood got LSD from wherever they could for distribution and scaled up whenever they had a larger source. The 'larger source' was offered to them in 1968 by Tim

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* Lee and Pratt, ps.141, 342.

Scully, who recruited them as distributors. Ron Stark was only introduced to the U.S. Brotherhood of Eternal Love in 1970 – by which time he was already working with Richard Kemp in Paris. Furthermore, Stark's association with the Brotherhood – which was essentially amorphous organization of subgroups – was limited to a few members of its LSD subsystem and particularly with Michael Randall (who succeeded the late John Griggs as leader). It would be a mistake to indentify – as Inspector Lee's book does – Billy Hitchcock, Nick Sand and Tim Scully as 'Brotherhood figures'. That would be analogous to saying that Owsley was a Hell's Angel because he distributed through them.

American expatriate David Solomon was assigned to procure ergotamine tartrate for the British acid producers. Using the alias of 'Dr Andressen', Solomon established a front company named Inter-Dominion Associates to buy the tartrate from the Dr Rentschler company in Laupheim, West Germany. Solomon would take the ergotamine tartrate to Switzerland, where Kemp would put it one of his safety deposit boxes in Zurich or Geneva. Fellow American, Paul Arnaboldi, who also had access to ergotamine tartrate, organised world distribution of the finished product.

Solomon recruited the Scotsman, Henry Barclay Todd, as tableting and distribution manager. Solomon also brought he fellow THC enthusiast, Gerry Thomas, on board. Thomas had earned the nickname of 'Elephant Boy' for moving a marijuana load into the United States inside a stuffed elephant. After working as a chemical engineer in Baton Rouge, Thomas moved to England and started his own business manufacturing chemical equipment. He met up once again with David Solomon, who had known him in New York. Solomon introduced Thomas to Richard Kemp and Christine Bott early in 1972.*

Fairly early on, Kemp realised that Gerry Thomas was a negative asset. According to Leaf Fielding, who was recruited by Todd and trained up for tableting, Thomas was entrusted with a sizeable bottle of LSD crystal but, 'When Richard got it back it had mysteriously shrunk. Light-fingered Gerry played no further part in

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* Lee and Pratt, p.139; Tendler and May, p.81.

the nascent acid ring'.* David Solomon, unwisely as we shall see, was more forgiving of Thomas and carried on working with him.

In 1971, Richard Kemp and Christine Bott moved into a house in Westbourne Grove Terrace, west London, where Kemp set up a functioning lab to make LSD. For security, Kemp shifted premises regularly for short production runs. But, as the noise coming from the pump in the lab was noisy enough to arouse suspicion, Kemp and Bott began to look around for a more secure location away from London.

From the start, Kemp and Todd agreed that each tab should contain 200 µg of LSD. But when Kemp bought a few tabs of his own acid at a festival he found them a bit weak. Kemp got his friend Andy Munro to test them at a laboratory at the University of East Anglia. When Munro reported back that the acid content was nearer 100 µg, Kemp was outraged. Unlike Todd, with his taste for high living, Kemp and Bott rejected material affluence and looked forward to a self-sufficient 'good life' of goat-breeding and organic farming. To them, making money out of acid may have been necessary, but it was a necessary evil. The diluting of the trips was a betrayal of the political mission. As Todd owned up and promised not to do it again, he might have been forgiven. However, according to what author Andy Roberts was told by someone close to both Todd and Kemp, the tipping point was Kemp's discovery that Todd had invested heavily in General Franco's Spanish Highway Project.†

In documents from police files on the political views of members of the group, Richard Kemp is described as, 'right-wing until midway through studies at Liverpool; converted to left-wing revolutionary'. Dr. Christine Bott, an NHS practitioner, is noted as having attended seminars organised by RD Laing, and is described as left-wing; as are Dr Mark Tcharney, scientist Andrew Munro and Todd's distributors, Alston Hughes and Martin Annable. The political views of Todd are listed as 'unknown'. Brian Cuthbertson, Todd's assistant, is described in police files as 'slightly right of centre'. Paul Arnaboldi's politics are recorded as 'unknown'. The 'motivations' of each suspect is described as 'financial', except for Kemp and Bott:

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* Leaf Fielding, *To Live Outside the Law*, p.120.

† Roberts, p.214.

'Motive for suspected LSD activity: a catalyst for British revolution by youth brought on by the use of LSD'. David Solomon, a leftist, was thought to be an ex-member of the Communist Party of the United States, although when the Operation Julie police investigated him they were told by the FBI that this could not be verified. They did learn however, that Solomon had served with the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) during the Second World War.*

After the split with Kemp, Todd recruited Andy Munro as his chemist. Munro is described in the police files as a 'left-wing activist', who had been an organiser of radical student politics at the University of East Anglia. Leaf Fielding, who tableted and distributed his acid but met him only later in prison, describes Munro as:

> ‘Everyman from the tarot pack, walking along with his head in the clouds, full of fascinating ideas, just on the point of stepping over a cliff. His knowledge was encyclopaedic. He taught me about the Albigensian heresy. The Cathars – also known as Albigensians... Pope Innocent III launched a crusade against them... the crusader army destroyed the independent county of Languedoc, city by city, in a whole series of massacres. That’s how Paris extended its rule to the Mediterranean... The Popes squashed the gnostics too. Their error was that they called God direct, they didn’t need priests to phone on their behalf. If their ideas had caught on, the Catholic hierarchy would’ve been made redundant. So the gnostics had to go...’†

Fielding had become an anarchist at Reading University, which he attended from 1966 to ‘67 before dropping out:

> ‘Something had seriously gone wrong with the human adventure. Unless we could sort it out we were for the chop. Protesting about the bad state of affairs had little effect. People had to see for themselves what was going on. With acid there was a good chance that they would. I had, and I wasn’t alone. In the summer of ’67 hundreds of

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* Lee and Pratt, ps.371-8.

† Fielding, p.61.

> thousands of high-spirited trippers were optimistic that mankind was on the point of taking the next step up the evolutionary ladder. The qualities that had enabled homo sapiens to manipulate his environment had also placed him on the brink of destruction... LSD was the tool that could help us to see a way back from the brink, by enabling us to appreciate that fundamentally we are all one – while giving us the confidence to celebrate our diversity and our differences. What fun, having a mission to save the world'.*

Later, Fielding became more circumspect about his mission. Dealing acid in Thailand he observed:

> 'Our acid went in a couple of days, hoovered up among the thousands of US servicemen. I don't know what I expected but no peace movement broke out among the ground crews. The planes still took off from the base daily. Going to bomb Cambodia'.†

Fielding at his interview with Henry Todd for the job of tableting, was asked, 'What do you think about acid?' Fielding replied: 'Acid isn't susceptible to easy analysis. Let's see... LSD is probably the best hope the human race has got of coming to grips with its problems'. Todd responded, 'Fair enough. I think pretty much the same myself'. Todd then proceeded to explain the security arrangements befitting the 'very high stakes' they were playing for. The arrangements were certainly those befitting of a secret underground organisation. Meets took place in such genteel settings as the teashop next to the entrance to Kew Gardens ('amazing cakes and scones'): 'If one of us doesn't make it we default to a fall-back option four hours later'. A phone call arranging a meeting for a chat at the pub at five on Saturday meant meet at the pre-arranged rendezvous at three on Thursday. The only organisation to be spoken of was Todd's business front, Intertrans. No hippie dress; business suits only. Fielding searched the south of England for an accessible, secluded hiding place in the woods. This involved burying a box containing hundreds of thousands of Acid

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* Ibid. p.70.
† Ibid. p.104.

tablets at one spot, and collecting a stash of sales money from another hole dug three hundred yards away. Tableting was dangerous work. Fielding describes what happened after he absorbed a massive dose of LSD which got into a cut in his hand through a tear in a rubber glove:

> ‘The floor was a mass of writhing tendrils. I sank down into it, unable to move for over four million years. Generations grew up, grew old, died and were reborn on the little rock spinning around a fire in space. Through the confetti of millennia I grew tired of the interminable human story, but it rolled inexorably on and on, cruelty upon kindness upon cruelty, until mercifully at the smoking end of time, Lord Shiva danced the world out of existence’.*

The British acid underground, which had begun production in London after Kemp's return from working at Ronald Stark's laboratory in France in 1970, was, by 1974, split into two completely independent laboratories and distribution networks. Todd procured equipment for a laboratory he set up in Chesterfield, Derbyshire, then for a second production run moved the operation to London. Fielding, having set up a health food shop in Reading, was put in charge of distribution. Russell Spencely supplied Alston Hughes in Wales, who in turn distributed the acid to a number of wholesale dealers in Wales and Birmingham. Todd employed Martin Annable to collect the money for previous laid-on deliveries at pre-arranged drops or meeting places.

In the ‘other’ camp, Richard Kemp and Christine Bott moved out of London. After living in a caravan for a while, they bought a secluded cottage in Blaencaron, Penlleinau, just north of the Brecon Beacons in Mid-Wales. They were helped out financially by Mark Tcharney and his partner Hilary Rees, both of whom, like Bott, found employment locally as NHS doctors. In 1974, Paul Arnaboldi bought a mansion at Plas Llysin to house Kemp’s new lab. Arnaboldi was quite rich, having been awarded a large pay-out in an accident compensation case. Arnaboldi’s cover story was that he had bought the mansion as a retirement home for his mother in Florida; and that

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* Ibid. p.225

he was using it to write a biography of John F Kennedy.* Kemp and Bott's country cottage at Blaencaron had two acres of land to support living the good life of self-sustainability. Bott, a keen supporter of organic farming, and member of the Soil Association, bred goats and cultivated a large vegetable garden.

The first LSD production run at the cottage was planned for early 1975, but had to be cancelled because Kemp was traumatised by an accident near Plas Llysin in which a local rector's wife, Sheila Hughes, was killed when her vehicle collided with Kemp's Range Rover (evidently, he was *not* on acid at the time).† The following year, in spring 1976, Arnaboldi arrived from his other home in Majorca to help Kemp with a production run. David Solomon, who had stockpiled enough ergotamine tartrate to make 3 kilos of LSD, was supplying the tartrate to both the Kemp and Todd networks. Kemp now had the expertise to break down the tartrate and convert the residue into high quality LSD crystals in less than a month. The crystals were good enough to be kept fresh in storage for many years afterwards. To deliver the acid tabs to the distributors Kemp used a system of dead letter drops, such as tins buried under trees in the woods. The money was then passed back to the suppliers using the same route. Mark Tcharney, the chief courier of Kemp's tablets, supplied David Solomon and Izchak Sheni, an Israeli who had addresses in London and Amsterdam. Amazingly, for the first half of the seventies, the British Acid Underground - or the 'Microdot Gang', as it became known in media demonology - happily turned out hundreds of millions of high-quality doses of LSD to satisfied customers without anyone in authority realising how big the 'industry' in Britain had now become.

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* Ibid. p.61.

† Ebenezer, *Operation Julie: The World's Greatest LSD Bust*, p.50.

9 – The Downfall of the Brotherhood of Eternal Love

Ronald Stark and the Brotherhood

Billy Hitchcock's problems with keeping his Swiss Bank records private and beyond the reach of the Inland Revenue Service seem to have begun when he separated from his wife Aurora in the fall of 1968. Aurora had in her possession some compromising letters from Billy's Swiss bank which she passed onto her divorce lawyer. In early 1969, Billy Hitchcock's associate, Charles Rumsey, was stopped and held by US Customs when he returned from a trip to Switzerland carrying a suitcase full of cash from the Paravacini Bank. Rumsey was effectively acting as 'bag man' for Hitchcock and couldn't readily deny he was working for him. Freddie Paravicini, the bank owner, tried to cover over the transaction by producing a letter saying the money was a loan, but his operation, as far as federal agents were concerned, was now suspect. Both Paravicini and Hitchcock had previously made a lot money playing the stock markets but their good run ended when they took a bath after investing in some chancy share issues. Hitchcock also lost a lot of the money he had invested on behalf of Nick Sand, Terry 'the Tramp' Tracey and Bear Stanley.*

Another cause of concern for Hitchcock was Tim Scully's arrest on May 26, 1969 at Napa County Airport, California, in relation to incriminating evidence found in the bust of his second Denver laboratory. Sully was bailed a couple of days later, light of the cash he was carrying when he was arrested. Scully, through his lawyer, submitted a statement to the IRS to get his money but learned that the IRS were only concerned only with money in his possession he claimed was Hitchcock's. Hitchcock, facing an IRS investigation of

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* Except where referenced otherwise, the account of the events in this chapter relies on Tim Scully's testimony in correspondence with the author, September 2019 to May 2020.

his tax affairs which was to grind on for years, now found it advisable to drop out of involvement with the LSD underground and move back east.

So when Ronald Stark, in early 1970, having just done a successful LSD production run in Paris, flew in from Europe and approached Billy Hitchcock to do some business, Hitchcock deferred. But he did direct Stark westwards to meet Nick Sand and Tim Scully.

In Lee and Shlain's book *Acid Dreams*, the account of Ronald Stark's first meeting with the Brotherhood of Eternal Love goes as follows. In August 1969, Ronald Hadley Stark drove across San Jacinto Mountains of California and descended on the bungalow and teepees at the Brotherhood of Eternal Love's Idyllwild ranch with an offer they couldn't refuse.* Stark was carrying a bottle containing a kilo of pure LSD made at a laboratory in Europe. Stark talked about his expertise in scams: smuggling drugs in consignments of Japanese equipment, utilising business fronts in West Africa, and moving money through a maze of shell companies set up by his lawyers in various continents. However, he explained, he also had a mission: to use LSD in order to facilitate the overthrow of the political systems of both the capitalist West and communist East by inducing altered states of consciousness in millions of people. Stark also hinted that he was well-connected in the world of covert politics.

This narrative would make a great scene in a psychedelic 20th century western directed by Quentin Tarantino. But it is a myth. *Acid Dreams* claims that by the summer of 1969 the Brotherhood was 'stymied by lack of raw materials' for LSD production, and 'It was at this point that a mysterious figure named Ronald Hadley Stark appeared on the scene'. But, as Scully points out, in the summer of 1969 the Brotherhood was busy selling vast quantities of Orange Sunshine and was not short of anything. According to *Acid Dreams*, 'Stark spoke ten languages fluently, including French, German, Italian, Arabic and Chinese'. Tim Scully disputes this: 'Everybody I know who knew him says that's not true. He spoke English, French, German, Italian, and apparently some Arabic. He did not speak Spanish and tried to use his Italian unsuccessfully to substitute for it.'

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* Martin Lee and Bruce Shlain,pp.248-251.

Most importantly, Ron Stark didn't suddenly appear on the California scene ‘coincidently’ following the demise of John Griggs in summer 1969. Stark first appeared in California in spring 1970. At Billy Hitchcock’s suggestion, Stark reached out to Tim Scully and Nick Sand, first by sending as an envoy his colleague Tord Sorenson, a.k.a. Tord Svenson, an operator of an LSD lab that had been busted in Boston in 1967. Tim Scully initially met Ron Stark in March or April 1970 and shortly thereafter introduced him to Nick Sand at the Cloverdale ranch. Scully recalls:

> ‘Ron Stark did not deliver a kilo of LSD to the Brotherhood. When he came to California to meet me, after a preliminary visit by his chemist, Tord Svenson, he convinced me to introduce him to Nick Sand and he brought that LSD along as his calling card. By the way, it wasn't in a bottle, it was in a plastic bag. Nick remembered it as being a pound while I remembered it as being a kilo. He claimed to have European laboratories that could produce an unlimited amount of LSD and all he lacked was American distribution. I was thrilled to hear that because by then some of the gumption had leaked out of my enthusiasm for saving the world by making LSD. I still believed that it would be a positive force but I was becoming less and less convinced that simply spreading LSD to the four winds would save the world while at the same time I was free on appeal bond from the bust of my second Denver lab and facing a possible total of 56 years in Colorado state prison. Over a period of days Ron managed to convince us to introduce him to the Brotherhood and we took him down to the Brotherhood Ranch in Southern California’.

Takeover

Stark entered the world of Brotherhood’s LSD subsystem at a time when the British commodities dealers, Michael Druce and Ronald Craze, seemed reluctant to deliver the raw materials they had been paid for in advance. Nick Sand, accompanied by Donald Munson, went to see Druce, who offered excuses about difficulties and delays.

But the most important excuse he kept to himself: he had been visited by a detective sergeant from Scotland Yard, who informed him that raw materials in an illegal LSD lab in the US had been traced back to his company (the US lab had actually been Tim Scully's second Denver operation, raided back in June 1968). The officer warned Druce that if he wanted to stay out of trouble with the law he had better not supply any more chemicals that might be used for making LSD.*

According to Craze's memoirs, by 1970 Alban Feeds was keeping afloat financially, having turned a profit of £128,000 in the first year of trading, although it was overextended as regards investment, and in debt to the National Westminster Bank. But Craze fails to mention that what was keeping the company afloat was almost certainly the money Nick Sand had given Druce to obtain raw materials such as lysergic acid and ergotamine tartrate.

Whilst Druce and Craze weren't coming up with the goods, they showed no inclination to pay back the money that had been advanced to them. For a solution Stark had a trick up his sleeve. In a safe deposit box in Hamburg was a stockpile of several kilos of ergotamine tartrate which Ronald Craze had put there. The stockpile was a strategic asset of Alban Feeds: its market value was likely to increase over time; and it was collateral for loans from the bank. Stark's trap was set when Lester Friedman, who acted as the go-between for Sand's raw materials purchases, told Druce that a firm in Switzerland called Inland Alkaloids wanted to make a bulk purchase of ergotamine tartrate. Craze sent documents for the sale, expecting payment in return, but heard nothing. Craze thought he had ensured that the chemicals could not be collected without proper authorization, but his instructions had not been specific enough. Stark's assistant, Simon Walton, walked into the German firm's offices, presented documents for the order, and walked out with the 9 kilos of ergotamine tartrate. Inland Alkaloids was in fact nothing more than a front company with a Swiss postal box number. The directors were Lester Friedman and Simon Walton.

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* Tendler and May, **p.67.**

Craze was convinced that Druce, who had been swindling money from their company, had been complicit in the scam. So he ousted him from the business. But, Craze wrote letters to Sand, Friedman and Hitchcock, telling them that their scam had ruined his business and he wasn't prepared to let the matter drop. Craze was soon visited in London by Nick Sand and Lester Friedman. To Craze, Friedman seemed sympathetic; Sand less so:

> 'He said that I wasn't as innocent as I made out, and that I had taken money from Billy Hitchcock when I was in America for a consignment that was never delivered. I denied it completely, saying that the only money I had received was to set up an animal feed business and that it was legitimate loan, legally endorsed, and this matter had ruined the business and it was now unlikely that I could pay Billy his money back, and that really upset me as Billy had been so generous. Nick Sand looked puzzled, as I think he could see I was genuine'.*

Craze insisted that he had been effectively ripped off by his own partner:

> 'He (Nick Sand) said what about Michael Druce and I told him how I thought he was implicated in the Inland Alkaloids affair though he had denied it. I also told him of the heated argument I had with him and how he had been swindling money out of my company which ended in us no longer having anything to with each other. Nick said that he was sorry for me but that there was nothing he could do to help me. Perhaps I should put it down to bad judgement and bad company and forget the whole thing as he couldn't see how I was going to get anywhere. I told him that wasn't an option. I had lost everything and my only way of surviving was to track down who was behind Inland Alkaloids, and if I couldn't do it myself I would have to go to the police... if they knew anything at all or

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* Ronald D Craze, *More Snakes Than Ladders: The Throw of the Dice* (Book 1 of a Trilogy).

> could find out anything I begged them to get in touch with me as time was of the essence'.

Craze was left wondering: what they would make of his threat to go to the police? After receiving a number of anonymous telephone calls, which seemed to him vaguely threatening, Craze got an invite from a 'Professor Ronald Stark' to meet him at the Army and Navy Club, a plush gentleman's club on Pall Mall, at 3 o'clock the following afternoon.* When Craze arrived Stark shook his hand, motioned him to two chairs in the far corner of the room, and ordered coffee and biscuits. Stark and said that he had been requested to meet Craze by 'some friends' who had been disturbed by letters he had written them:

> 'He asked me politely if I could explain what happened. So I told him the whole story of Inland Alkaloids, Mike Druce's treachery, the destruction of our business and possible bankruptcy. He listened patiently and when I finished he shook his head saying it was a most distressing business. He said that he wasn't without influence and with my permission perhaps he could talk to the bank.'

Then, Craze recalls, Stark came to the point:

> 'He still needed supplies, we no longer delivered. In my heart I knew that I would never catch up with the people behind Inland Alkaloids, and it might be dangerous involving the police – I just wanted to survive, and be shot of the whole mess. Stark was very polite and pleasant. I finished my coffee with assurances that he would do everything he could with the information given to help us, I took my leave. He had read me correctly. I was to learn five years later that he had been sent over to see if I should be eliminated, and to arrange for a contract on me, but he had reported back that I was small fry, and as long as the

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* Craze may have confused the Army and Navy Club with the Oxford and Cambridge Club, both of which are on London's Pall Mall. Stark used to give out the Oxford and Cambridge Club as his London address. He gained membership by conning the management by convincing them he was a Harvard Graduate. He extended the fakery by using his membership of the Oxford and Cambridge Club to qualify for membership of the Harvard Club as well.

> organisation took preventative measures, I would probably cause them no more trouble'.

Craze's claim that he later learned he was being assessed for an 'elimination' contract must be treated with scepticism, as there is no record of anyone in the Brotherhood of Eternal Love or its LSD sub-system ever carrying out retribution by means of death threats or actual assassination (notwithstanding the FBI statement back in 1962 that 'Stark is reported to possess a sidearm and his mental condition is reported to be questionable. Therefore care should be exercised in contacts with him).

Craze resented his erstwhile partner Druce for ripping off their company's money, but his own self-image as a 'legit' entrepreneur, blissfully unaware of any illegality, never convinced Nick Sand; or Tim Scully, who says, 'Craze was very disingenuous in claiming that all of that money was intended as an investment in Alban Feeds. The amount that was invested in Alban Feeds was essentially a tip or a bribe for Druce and Craze... I believe that Druce and Craze already knew that they were going to have trouble selling us more ergot alkaloids at the time when they accepted a large order from Nick'. Nick Sand later said he saw none of the ergotamine tartrate consignment he had helped to extort from Charles Druce and Ronald Craze; it almost certainly went to Stark's labs in France and Belgium, although Stark had assured the Brotherhood it was safely stashed in Tangiers.* Tim Scully says, 'Ron Stark and Nick Sand competed for The Brotherhood of Eternal Love's favors and Ron Stark eventually won'.

Over the years Stark had built up a network of very useful contacts for moving money and materials around the world through front companies. During his stay in Ghana in 1967, Stark as representative of the mysterious Inter-biochemical company, had befriended an economic adviser at the American Embassy in Accra, Charles Adams. They resumed their friendship later in Belgium. Stark also befriended Ned Coffin, the principal of a company named West African Services which sold heavy electrical equipment to West African countries. Coffin helped Stark obtain ergotamine tartrate

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* Lee and Shlain, p.251; Tendler and May, p.84.

through a state-owned pharmaceutical company. Stark persuaded Coffin's son who worked at a New York law firm to handle his business affairs. The firm's partner in Paris, Sam Goekjian, drew up papers for a laboratory, named Le Clocheton, that Stark set up in Louvain-le-Neuve University, Belgium. Leading Brotherhood of Eternal Love organiser, Michael Randall, travelled to Belgium under an assumed name and stayed in the town with his family. It seemed like a perfect cover: university staff thought Stark was a genuine scientist; and the lab was making legitimate chemicals for export to Switzerland. Randall's order for LSD was shipped to New York concealed in Stark's Jaguar.* Back in California in 1970, Tim Scully was trying to get the acid Stark brought over from Europe tableted:

> 'The LSD that Ron brought was not very pure, having been precipitated by freezing rather than crystallized by gently cooling. It also had not been through preparative column chromatography (an important purification step). Ron wanted us to tablet the LSD so that the Brotherhood could distribute it. Nick was willing to do so but he wanted 50 per cent of the profits. I was somewhat reluctant but Ron managed to employ his skill as a con artist to convince me that it would be better for me to do the tableting than for Nick to do it. Ron offered to pay for all of the expenses involved and I soon found myself ordering a tablet machine from Joe Helpern in Chicago and organizing a crew to help me set up a tableting facility in Oregon. Sadly, when I went to pick up the tablet machine from Joe, it came with a free bonus of carloads of federal agents who followed me. Making a long story short, I eventually detected the surveillance when I turned off the interstate freeway at Pocatello, Idaho. I was unsuccessful at eluding them and eventually ended up parking the truck with the machine in it and flying back to California. I contacted my lawyer and arranged to have the machine sold for a legitimate purpose; he found a candy company that wanted to buy it. I had already started

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* Tendler and May, p.96.

> purifying Ron's LSD at the tableting facility in Oregon which was waiting for the machine that would now never arrive. I started to finish up that task, but a lab accident got me overdosed on LSD without a tolerance and I started hallucinating federal agents in the trees around the lab. That was the straw that broke the camel's back. I packed things up and handed the LSD over to The Brotherhood and told them I was sorry but I couldn't do the work any longer. The risks had grown too high while my sense of the benefits had dropped too low and the balance tipped solidly against further involvement in the LSD underground. Nick ended up finishing the purification and tableting of Ron Stark's acid by the way. And of course he collected his fee'.

Scully dropped out of active involvement in the LSD manufacturing scene in August 1970. Nick Sand, on the hand, had no intention of giving up his vocation, but the authorities were closing in. In July 1971 Richard Nixon declared the 'War on Drugs', and asked Capitol Hill for an initial $84m for 'emergency measures'. Nixon's Treasury initiated a Narcotics Traffickers Program (NPT) which coordinated joint BNDD-IRS strike forces. In October 1971, on the strength of intelligence reports and arrest records, Nick Sand was selected as a target for investigation by the NTP. The investigation led IRS agents to the offices of his lawyer, Peter Buchanan. They discovered from Buchanan's records that much of Sand's income could not be 'explained', and that some of it had been deposited in cashiers' cheques in a bank account for which Buchanan was a trustee. In Between February and June 1969 Buchanan had deposited Sand's money for the $155,000 purchase of Long Reach Ranch near Cloverdale.

Operation BEL

Billy Hitchcock's financial shenanigans were further exposed to the IRS when his Swiss bankers brought his bank records into the United States so they could sue him for nonpayment of money he owed them. In April 1971 the IRS questioned him about his various accounts and

subaccounts at the Paravicini bank. The banking records that the IRS accessed included subaccounts for Nick Sand, Bear Stanley, and Hell's Angel, Terry 'the Tramp' Tracey – all under aliases.

In late-1971, Tim Scully learned he was off the hook for charges stemming from the bust of his Denver lab. Because the police hadn't obtained a search warrant the Supreme Court ruled that search had been illegal. Scully's laboratory work was now concentrated on developing bio-feedback instruments which could measure the electrical activity of the brain, and identify brain wave patterns associated with the peak experiences of meditation. Now that he was going straight he hoped he'd be left alone. But in May 1972 Peter Buchanan telephoned Scully to say he had talked to the Feds in return for immunity from prosecution. Buchanan also said that he recommended to federal agents they should also offer immunity to Scully and Hitchcock in order to convict Sand and Stark. Scully then told Billy Hitchcock what Buchanan had done. In June 1972, Buchanan was subpoenaed to appear as a witness before the federal Grand Jury sitting in San Francisco. Hitchcock, growing increasingly nervous, was advised by Brotherhood leader, Michael Randall, 'Just keep quiet and everything will be fine'. After talking to his lawyers, Hitchcock still had reason to think Buchanan might keep quiet and warned Scully to stay off the radar, in case he too was subpoenaed.

Neither Scully nor Hitchcock were inclined to take up Buchanan's suggestion that they, like him, should testify as government witnesses. Scully and Hitchcock both left the United States for several months to dodge possible grand jury subpoenas which would've left them with a choice of testifying the grand jury or going to jail for contempt. As it happened, on the witness stand Buchanan did his best not to say anything too incriminating about his clients. But the prosecution drew enough information out of him for the IRS to begin investigations of Scully, Randall, Friedman and Stark.*

In May 1972, a top-secret 'war council' was held by the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs (BNDD) and various police drug squads at a hotel in San Francisco. By this time the Feds'

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* Tendler and May, ps.107-109.

deliberations on the San Francisco grand jury were already rolling along quite independently of a parallel Orange County investigation. The meeting of the various state agencies convened by the Orange County prosecutor may have aimed to get some input from the Feds into the evidence for the grand jury in Orange County. To some extent the investigators and prosecutors of State and Federal agencies were in competition with each other.

The meeting determined that the Brotherhood of Eternal Love was a 200-strong 'loosely-knit organisation with a core group', and was responsible for an estimated 50 per cent of all LSD and marijuana sales in the US. According to Tendler and May's book, *The Brotherhood*, a report that came out the meeting included a chart detailing the Brotherhood's organisational structure: it showed one arm of the organisation to be Robert Andrist's team of twenty or so who brought in grass from Mexico and hash from Afghanistan, to be passed on to a network of distributors in the US. The 'LSD arm' stemming from Michael Randall and Nick Sand had twenty main distributors in California, Hawaii and Oregon. Brotherhood members were described as 'mystics' who studied the 'religious' philosophy of Timothy Leary. Billy Hitchcock was placed alongside Leary at the top of the organisational pyramid.*

The chart – which, strangely enough, has never been reproduced anywhere – served to conjure up the spectre of an organisational hybrid consisting of a dangerous cult (with Timothy Leary assigned the role of spiritual guru) organised like a mafia (under the control of the crooked financier, Billy Hitchcock). Leary however, had no involvement in the Brotherhood's decision to become the distributors of Scully and Sand's LSD; and in no way participated in their marijuana and hash smuggling business. As for Hitchcock, he had never had any financial relationship with the Brotherhood of Eternal Love, if the Brotherhood is to be defined as the organisation founded by John Griggs, and its cadre of smugglers and distributors of LSD, etc. The gist of the elusive chart did however make it into the media: the *New York Times*, for example, referred to 'Timothy Leary's sex and drug sect, the Brotherhood of Eternal Love'.

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* Tendler and May, p.105.

The most important development to come out of the war council was the launching of a task force – named Operation BEL – which combined the investigations of the BNDD, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and local police drug squads. An Orange County grand jury gave a green light to a series of raids in August 1972 in which fifty-three people were arrested at dozens of houses in California, Hawaii and Oregon. Those arrested included leading players such as John Gale and Glenn Lynd. Two and half tons of hash, thirty gallons of hash oil, and 15 million LSD tablets were seized.* The Orange County District Attorney's Office jubilantly announced that the Brotherhood of Eternal Love had been broken as an organisation and confidently predicted that Leary would soon be extradited to complement the round-up. The raids were followed up with the release of a wanted poster featuring the mugshots of twenty-six alleged Brotherhood members, including Robert Ackerly, Hayatullah Tokri and Nick Sand.

At this point the BNDD turned Glenn Lynd, who became their star witness when the Orange County grand jury sat again in November 1972. Lynd laid out the whole history of the Brotherhood of Eternal Love: from its pre-history in Anaheim to the Mystic Arts World Store, Lynd's own travels in Afghanistan, the purchase of the Idyllwild ranch, incriminating conversations with Leary, the arrangements with Sand and Scully which produced Orange Sunshine LSD, etc, etc.

While Lynd was testifying to the grand jury in Orange County, one 'Leland Jordan', alias Nick Sand, and Judy Shaughnessy were cooking LSD in a state-of-the-art lab in downtown St. Louis and at a smaller lab in their rented house in Fenton, Missouri. At the end of 1972, Nick and Judy went on vacation, but as they forgot to put a stop order on mail delivery at their Fenton house, their mailbox overflowed. The mailman called the police, who noticed that water was leaking out from under the front door. Nick and Judy had also forgotten to put oil in their heater before going away; so as it ran out of fuel the pipes froze and one of them broke. The police entered the premises and found drugs in the upstairs bedroom and the laboratory

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* Schou, p.267.

in the basement. They also found that there was another lab in St. Louis. When Nick and Judy returned to Fenton they were arrested. Police claimed they had seized enough materials to make 14 million doses of LSD. Inconveniently for Tim Scully, the St. Louis police found an old flow-chart in his handwriting for making LSD in the lab. But fortunately for Scully, as well as for Sand and Shaughnessy, the police charges for the St. Louis bust didn't stick, because the court later determined that the search, carried out without a warrant, was legally invalid.

In March 1972, an IRS agent had interviewed Sam Goekjian in Paris regarding Stark's ownership of a Panamanian paper company called La Hormega, which held the titles to Nick Sand's Cloverdale ranch. Then in the summer of 1972 Goekjian was subpoenaed to appear before the grand jury in San Francisco. Before testifying, Goekjian attempted to contact Ron Stark repeatedly but was unable to get in touch with him.

Lester Friedman was also subpoenaed. On October 13, 1972, he appeared before the San Francisco grand jury and testified extensively about 'Doctor Stark'. He did not mention his involvement with Stark's laboratory at Le Clocheton, Belgium, but he couldn't hide it from the federal prosecutors. In the fall of 1972 John Youngquist, one of the two Assistant US Attorneys on the case (he handled the income tax aspects of the case while John Milano prosecuted the drug portion) discovered Goekjian's role in setting up a research laboratory for Stark, and Friedman's role as a shareholder in the venture. In early November 1972 a BNDD agent and an IRS agent visited Goekjian's office in Paris and gathered documents relating to Ron Stark and his Le Clocheton lab in Belgium. On November 13, BNDD agent Gary Elliott visited the lab. The clandestine functions of the lab had been mostly dismantled, but the public 'front' was still intact and Elliott was able to gather some evidence and documentation. The unwitting staff members were still present and one of them, Thelma Berge, the office manager, was eventually subpoenaed for the LSD upcoming conspiracy trial in San Francisco.

Investigators were now beginning to unravel the mysteries of their targets' incomes, businesses and properties. Buchanan, they learned, had passed the titles of land purchases, to a Liechtenstein front company called Four Star Anstalt. This company had been set up

by Nick Sand, but Stark held the paperwork. Four Star Anstalt was used eventually to take ownership of the Brotherhood ranch. *

On February 21, 1973, a federal grand jury in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania indicted Billy Hitchcock on charges of income tax evasion and regulation T violations. Hitchcock finally cracked and struck a plea bargain. He agreed to testify before the federal grand jury in San Francisco as an 'unindicted co-conspirator' and name his fellow conspirators. In in return he would write the IRS a cheque for $543,800 and walk free with a five-year suspended sentence. In April, 1973, Hitchcock gave grand jury testimony in which he admitted more or less everything about his role in LSD finances; and incriminated Tim Scully. Hitchcock's testimony also gave the government enough leverage to force Charlie Rumsey to plea bargain. Subsequently, Rumsey testified before the grand jury on April 20, filling in more of the story. April 26, 1973 an indictment returned: The US v. Nick Sand, Tim Scully, Lester Friedman, David Mantell, Michael Randall, Michael Druce and Ronald Stark. Only Sand, Scully and Lester Friedman were 'available' to appear in court. Druce couldn't be extradited from the United Kingdom, as the existing extradition treaty didn't cover conspiracy charges (he turned down an offer to appear as a 'non-indicted conspirator')† Mantell, Randall and Stark were nowhere to be found.

The Scully-Sand Conspiracy Trial

Billy Hitchcock, on becoming an 'unindicted co-conspirator', had offered Scully a loan of $10,000 for legal fees with the recommendation that he report to the authorities and apply to do likewise. Scully took the money but declined to snitch. The situation for both Sand and Scully was desperate. Presiding Judge Conti had made his feelings clear in pre-trial proceedings when he mentioned casually that he wished he had access to the death penalty in the case. The government had overwhelming evidence that the defendants had been making psychedelic drugs. Scully testified, untruthfully, that he had been making ALD-52 (1-acetyl-LSD), which the government had

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* Tendler and May, p.89.

† Tendler and May, p.113

not yet specified as an illicit substance, rather than LSD-25. But the prosecution, basing their argument on the available scientific literature, were able to show, firstly, that if ALD-52 readily underwent hydrolysis (a reaction with water) it would lead to the formation of LSD, and secondly, that the synthesis of ALD-52 required LSD as an ingredient.

Also the government had come into possession of financial records which showed that very large sums of money had been used to make purchases of raw materials for making LSD. As it would have been clear to the jury that Hitchcock himself had been a major player in the conspiracy, the defense argued that Hitchcock was the mastermind of it all and tried to explain away all the money as all being his (not that this would have bothered Hitchcock greatly, as he had been granted immunity, and was in no further legal jeopardy).

Nick Sand's lawyer, Michael Kennedy, tried to call Timothy Leary as a defence witness but Leary, who was negotiating a deal with the FBI to get out of prison, declined to appear. Scully naively tried to explain his idealistic reasons for making psychedelics; but that did not work either. In January 1974 the jury returned guilty verdicts on the conspiracy charges. Judge Conti, saying he regarded idealists as the ‘most dangerous people of all’, passed sentences higher that anyone in the Brotherhood of Eternal Love got as a result of Operation Bel. Scully got a sentence of 20 years imprisonment and Sand 15 years. Lester Friedman was acquitted of conspiracy to make drugs, but later pleaded guilty to perjury. Scully says now, ‘With 20/20 hindsight I regret having taken the witness stand. Lying on the witness stand is never a good idea. If you're guilty it's best to sit mute’. He adds, ‘I was stuck with the fibs that I'd told for many, many years because I didn't want to admit to having perjured myself. The result is that the historical record got very confused. I feel bad about that too’.

Sand and Scully were both incarcerated at McNeil Island high-security prison, Sand, true to form, had LSD smuggled in courtesy of Judy, and organised tripping sessions with fellow inmates. Scully stayed straight and got a job in the prison library where he studied constitutional law in preparation for his appeal. In August 1974, Sand and Scully were released pending their appeals after their bail-bonds were reduced.

The Ninth Circuit Court denied the appeals on September 13, 1976. Scully, now dependent on the legal services of the federal public defender, appealed this decision to the US Supreme Court. He submitted a petition for writ of certiorari: to have a judicial review by a higher court of Judge Conti's proceedings. This petition was denied on February 22, 1977 and Judge Conti ordered him to turn himself in at McNeil Island by March 15, 1977. Scully complied.

Nick Sand hadn't bothered with an appeal to the Supreme Court. As soon as he heard that the Ninth Circuit Court had denied the appeals he decided to abscond. With his ex-girlfriend, Nancy Pinney, driving the getaway car, Sand took off. The DEA, figuring he would do just that, tailed the couple but lost them. Sand bought a load of fishing tackle to look like a tourist and crossed into Canada, where he was joined by his partner, Judy Shaughnessy.

In 1977 Sand, now using the false ID, 'Ted Parody', was converted to the ideas of the Indian mystic, Shree Rajneesh. Sand and Shaughnessy grew and sold magic mushrooms which made them enough money to travel to meet Rajneesh at his ashram near Pune, India. They bought a house there and Sand produced vegetables for the ashram in a large hydroponic garden. He also constructed an LSD lab at his house, having had located a source of ergotamine tartrate in India. Sand helped Rajneesh get a passport to leave India and establish a Rajneeshee community near Antelope, Oregon. Posing as a Canadian, Sand moved there and remained until the ashram disbanded in late 1985. He returned to Canada, settling in Aldergrove, British Columbia and grew marijuana indoors using hydroponics.

Trying his hand at a straight job for a change, Sand invested in gold mining machinery and worked at placer mining. But in the late 1980s his partners, the Smith brothers, stole his equipment and tried to auction it. Sand was able to block the sale, but in revenge the Smiths falsely accused him of arson. The resulting investigation by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police revealed that Ted Parody's ID was false. Released on bail, Sand fled to Mexico and Central America, eventually returning to Canada using another false ID. In September, 1996 he was arrested at a lab he had set up at Port Coquitlam, near Vancouver. The RCMP, seizing large amounts of his DMT, MDMA, and LSD, soon worked out that they had arrested the notorious Nick Sand, who had been a fugitive from US justice for 20 years.

In February 1998, Sand was given a nine year sentence which the Canadian authorities agreed to let run concurrently with his US sentence. His lawyer made a deal with the US authorities for him to be repatriated to California in return for credit for time served in Canada. But Judge Conti, who was specifically brought of retirement to pass judgement on Sand, handed him an additional consecutive five-year term for jumping bail. On December 22, 2000 Sand was released from prison after winning an appeal that overturned his conviction for bail jumping back in 1976 on the grounds that he was never given a specific date to report to the court. In 2009 Sand told a *National Geographic* television interviewer that during his career he had made 140 million doses of LSD. Sand talked about writing a memoir but never got round to it. He died on April 24, 2017.*

When Scully was released on appeal bond in 1974, he enrolled in an external degree program from the Humanistic Psychology Institute. This was for designing and building a computerized physiological monitoring system; writing software for it; and gathering experimental data for dissertation research. During this respite, Scully also started doing volunteer work. One of his clients was a young handicapped woman for whom he designed a nonvocal communication system. When he was re-incarcerated on March 15, 1977, following the failure of his appeals, he was able to develop the system for her by having parts sent into the prison so he could assemble her computer and program it. Scully continued to do volunteer work all of the time he was in prison, including working as an assistant to the prison psychologist at McNeil Island. Scully was also able to do statistical analysis for his Ph.D. which was awarded a few months before he was released to a halfway house. As his sentence was reduced from 20 to ten years, Scully was paroled on February 11, 1980. Scully came out of prison in debt: an unpaid $10,000 fine, a substantial amount owed to the IRS and tuition fees owed to the Humanistic Psychology Institute. Having to work to pay the debts, the amount of volunteer work he could do was limited but he continued to work through Computers for the Physically

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* Tim Scully, Nick Sand, May 10, 1941 – April 24, 2017, May 5, 2017. https://erowid.org/culture/characters/sand_nick/sand_nick_biography2.shtml

Handicapped to develop microcomputer-based communication aids. From 1987-2005 he worked as a consultant and software/hardware designer for the Autodesk corporation. Currently, among other projects, he is researching and writing about the history of underground LSD manufacturing,

Most of the Brotherhood of Eternal Love fugitives who featured on Operation BEL's wanted poster in 1972 were eventually caught. None of them had to serve very long prison terms; and most of them went back into dealing or smuggling drugs afterwards. The short sentences they got were indicative of the difference between the Orange County grand jury case and the federal grand jury case in San Francisco. Almost everyone indicted by the Orange County grand jury eventually was able to get the most of the charges thrown out because the evidence that been gathered was too fragmentary and too flimsy, while the federal grand jury in San Francisco worked under the direction of very professional prosecutors who gathered enough information to make their charges stick.*

The *New York Times,* referring to the Brotherhood of Eternal Love as 'Timothy Leary's sex and drug sect', misunderstood both of them. The following chapter deals with Leary's extraordinary journey through further 'reality tunnels'.

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* Schou, p.280.

10 – Timothy Leary's Reality Tunnels: One Escape After Another

> 'The only condition for revolution is for them the adequate organisation of their conspiracy… They embrace inventions which are supposed to perform revolutionary miracles: fire bombs, destructive machines with magical effects, riots which are to be more miraculous and surprising the less rational their foundation is'.*
>
> Karl Marx

Political Intoxication

Given that all of the CIA's operational files on MK-Ultra were destroyed by order of CIA director Richard Helms in 1973, one can only speculate about the program's 'practical' implications. One might speculate that any counter-insurgency strategy with access to the discoveries of the CIA's MK-Ultra project would have available an arsenal of techniques when faced with a serious political challenge. The personality profiles of opposition leaders could be studied in order to select the most effective techniques with which to target them. Infiltrators, schooled in methods of resisting interrogation learned from experiments, could lie their way into organisations and undermine their existing leaders. With Human Ecology's studies of the vulnerabilities of communities by sociologists and anthropologists, local value systems could be undermined by engineering the arrival of religious missionaries, cults, criminal gangs and political parties. Secretly-sponsored terrorist groups, seeking to intoxicate the body politic with selective acts of violence, could control recruits with methods based on prison camp 'group therapy'. Social cohesion of

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* Quoted in Walter Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire* (Verso: 1976), p.12.

communities could be further unravelled by the introduction of narcotics, tested by mental health consultants. And, of course, the 'psy-warriors' and their media spin doctors could use their black propaganda techniques to brainwash the public into believing that none of these things were happening, and that even if they were, some other force must be responsible.

So much for theory and speculation, but what was happening on the ground? Though it can hardly be said that an American Revolution was in the air in 1969, there was much talk of it. *Rolling Stone* magazine had a special April 1969 edition on 'American Revolution: The Sound of Charging, Marching Feet'. The media the world over were talking about the 'Woodstock Nation.' But what was it? A record industry advertising campaign claimed, 'The Revolution is on CBS'. So was it all just a launch pad for a new range of off-the-shelf products, whose ingredients were sex, drugs, rock'n'roll and New Age religion; or a rejection of capitalist values, consumerist materialism and male chauvinism? Was it just a counter-culture; or did it represent a movement capable of mobilising the majority of the American people against racism and the military-industrial complex?

The Black Civil Rights movement, which grew stronger and more militant through the sixties, also inspired white student youth, who were further radicalised by their opposition to the war in Vietnam. In 1967 Martin Luther King announced, 'We are merely marking time in the civil rights movement if we do not take a stand against the war'.* By 1969, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) had a membership of over 100,000; and for the first time since the hey-day of the American Left in the pre-McCarthyite 1940s, radicals had a mass audience for their ideas.

The CIA's Domestic Operations Division (DOD) was set up with the executive approval of President Lyndon Baines Johnson, but kept secret from Congress. The DOD's first project, code-named 'Resistance', co-opted local police 'Red squads' to spy on dissidents under the guise of providing security for CIA college recruiters. This was soon supplemented by 'Project Merrimac', which monitored

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* David J. Garrow, 'When Martin Luther King Came Out Against Vietnam', *New York Times*, 4 April 2017.

groups campaigning against CIA research facilities on campuses. The FBI was assigned to collect or manufacture evidence pointing to manipulation of US radicals by the agencies of 'international communism'.* According to Noam Chomsky, who, as an important 1960s anti-war activist, was on the receiving end of a lot of secret state skulduggery:

> 'government agencies financed, helped organise and supplied arms to right-wing terrorist groups that carried out fire-bombings, burglaries and shootings… in most cases [it was] the FBI, although one right-wing terrorist in Chicago claims that his group was financed and directed in part by the CIA'.†

J Edgar Hoover's FBI had been running a counter-intelligence program, known as Cointelpro, since the nineteen-fifties, when the shrinking US Communist Party and the Trotskyists were massively targeted. In the nineteen-sixties Cointelpro was expanded to take on Martin Luther King and his supporters in the Civil Rights Movement, then expanded further to subvert the Black Panther Party, and New Left anti-war activists. Campaigns were disrupted and organisations ripped apart by Hoover's army of eavesdroppers, provocateurs and black propagandists. President Johnson directed the CIA to determine if any of the targeted groups were getting funding or directions from Communist governments. This resulted in the launch in 1967 of Operation CHAOS by CIA Director Richard Helms under the supervision of chief of counter-intelligence James Jesus Angleton. CHAOS violated the Charter of the CIA, which specifically forbade any intervention by the agency in domestic politics. CHAOS initially focused on Black radical groups, in particular the Black Panther Party. It was then expanded to target radical students, antiwar groups, and the underground press. From 1967 to 1974, CHAOS amassed 7,200 files on American citizens and indexed 300,000 persons and organizations on its computer database. This illegal mass surveillance of US citizens unearthed zero evidence of collaboration between

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* Verne Lyon, 'The History of Operation Chaos', *Covert Action Information Bulletin No. 34.*

† Noam Chomsky, Introduction to Nelson Blackstock, *Cointelpro*.

radical groups and communist or pro-communist intelligence agencies. CHAOS however, had a life of its own, running more than two dozen undercover agents in the US, with a hundred or so other CIA sources surveilling US radicals active overseas.*

Weather Underground: Stalinism on Acid

The CIA's assessment of Students for a Democratic Society was more in tune with reality than the political perspective of the revolutionary student factions, who seemed to spend more time fighting each other than subverting the system. A CIA situation report in the run-up to the SDS convention of June 1969 clearly foresaw the coming split and collapse:

> 'The SDS prize continues to be fair game for take-over by any organised communist group on the American scene with the power, prestige and cunning to do so... It can be predicted that such efforts will continue until someone succeeds. Then SDS will split and their influence on the American campus can be expected to diminish'.†

Sure enough, at the congress of Students for a Democratic Society in June 1969 the organisation imploded. Bernadine Dohrn, one of the SDS's three elected full-time officers, who styled herself as a 'revolutionary communist', stormed the platform with her supporters and read out a statement summarily expelling all the rival factions. She then led her 'Action Faction' out of the hall shouting: 'Long Live People's War!'. The Action Faction first renamed themselves the Weathermen (inspired by the line in Dylan's 'Subterranean Homesick Blues': 'You don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows') and then the 'Weather Underground' to accommodate Women's Liberation. Through the summer of 1969 the Weathermen gathered their forces for a major mobilisation planned for the fall, designated as the 'Days of Rage'. In October, on the second anniversary of Che Guevara's death, six hundred helmeted

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* Jay Peterzell, 'Defending CHAOS: review of Frank J. Rafalko, MH/CHAOS: the CIA's Campaign Against the Radical New Left and the Black Panthers' www.washingtondecoded.com/site/2013/01/defending-chaos.html.

† Lee and Shlain, p.230.

Weatherpersons assembled in downtown Chicago waving Vietcong flags. Then, chanting their chosen 'anthem of the day', the Door's 'Break on Through (to the Other Side)', the six hundred, led by Dohrn, charged a large and well equipped squad of Mayor Daley's riot police. The day ended with hundreds of injuries and the arrest of around half the Weather Underground's membership – who were duly photographed and fingerprinted for future reference. As far as Dohrn and her co-leaders were concerned however, the cadre had been sufficiently 'blooded' - or at any rate *bloodied* – to get into the right frame of mind for taking the People's War underground. The Weather Underground then launched a bombing campaign, which managed not to kill anyone except three of its own members, who blew themselves up trying to make a bomb in a Greenwich Village town-house in March 1970.*

For many participants in the New Left, experiences with LSD were an essential dimension of political development. In the case of leftist groups such as the Weather Underground, LSD magnified a voluntarism as much based on atomised American individualism, with all its frontier spirit of conquest and destruction, as on Mao Zedong's collectivism. Martin Lee and Bruce Shlain, suggest in *Acid Dreams* that,

> 'the widespread use of LSD contributed significantly to the demise of the New Left, for it heightened the metabolism of the body politic and accelerated all the changes going on – positive and negative, in all their contradictions… During the intoxicating moments of the late 1960s, many radicals felt they were on the verge of a cataclysmic upheaval, an imminent break, a total revolution. The delusions of grandeur they entertained were amplified by psychedelic drugs to the point that some felt themselves invested with magical powers'.†

The Weather Underground even went so far as to praise Charles Manson and his 'Family' of drug-crazed killers as revolutionary fighters against 'rich white honkies' in Hollywood. 'What we're

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* Peter Cowie and David Horowitz, *Rolling Stone*, 30 September 1982.

† Lee and Shlain, p.217

about,' Bernadine Dohrn said at the time. 'Is being crazy motherfuckers and scaring the shit out of honky America'.*

Leading Anti-War campaigner, Dave Dellinger, whilst recognising that the upsurge in radical violence was a response to the killings of students and Black activists by National Guardsmen, FBI agents and racist cops, questioned the new tendency amongst radicals to mirror the blood-lust of tabloid journalism.† Raya Dunayevskaya, offering a Marxist critique of the urban guerrilla fantasies and the life-style politics of the counter-culture, argued that 'violent spouting' gave 'the Nixon-Agnew terrorists the excuse to conduct their preventative civil war before the objective conditions and subjective forces have coalesced to assure the victory of the social revolution'. Although the hippie counter-culture was 'certainly a superior phenomenon to the Establishment', its self-separation from the rest of American society was 'precisely what capitalism does want. That is to say, to break up the various revolutionary forces from ever finding each other'.‡

At a White House meeting of 5 June 1970, comprising representatives of the main intelligence agencies (CIA, FBI, NSA and DIA), President Richard Milhous Nixon, perusing the domestic surveillance reports, pronounced 'We are now confronted with a new and a grave crisis... Certainly, hundreds, perhaps thousands of Americans – mostly under 30 – are determined to destroy our society'. An interagency committee which convened the next day at CIA headquarters stated that there were several SDS chapters on college campuses which adhered to 'Weathermen ideology'. One of these chapters had been penetrated by live informants, although there was as yet no live informant coverage of the twenty-one Weather Underground members currently on the run as fugitives.*

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* Cowie and Horowitz, op cit.

† Dave Dellinger, 'There's No Business Like Bomb Business', *Oz* no. 41.

‡ Raya Dunayevskaya, 'Philosophy, life-style and U.S. workers', *News and Letters, Vol. 15, No. 8*, Oct, 1970.

* *Hearings before the select committee to study governmental operations with respect to intelligence agencies of the United States Senate 94th Congress Ist session Vol. 2*, September 23, 24 and 25, 1975, ps. 151-152.

In October 1970 Nixon signed the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act. This gave law enforcement officers the power to conduct break-ins and raids of premises without having to show the occupants a search warrant. In the new political climate, in which Leftist radicalism was seen by the forces of the establishment as a significant threat, state agencies made as much use of the new anti-drug laws as they could. Journalist Dan Baum recalls a conversation he had with the mastermind of Richard Nixon's team of burglars, John Erlichman, who had been imprisoned in 1975 for his role in the Watergate burglary:

> '"You want to know what this was really all about?" he asked with the bluntness of a man who, after public disgrace and a stretch in federal prison, had little left to protect. "The Nixon campaign in 1968, and the Nixon White House after that, had two enemies: the antiwar left and black people. You understand what I'm saying? We knew we couldn't make it illegal to be either against the war or black, but by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin, and then criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities. We could arrest their leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify them night after night on the evening news. Did we know we were lying about the drugs? Of course we did."'*

Leary's Armed Love

In January 1970 an Orange County judge handed Leary a ludicrous sentence totalling 20 years for two minor marijuana offences. As Leary's friends organised a defence campaign, the Brotherhood of Eternal Love paid the Weather Underground $25,000 to free him; a task made much easier by his transfer from Fulsom Prison to the minimum security establishment at San Luis Obispo. In September 1970, Leary, according to his own account, took his life in his hands and climbed along forty yards of telephone cable which ran twenty

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* Dan Baum, 'Legalize It All: How to win the war on drugs', *Harpers Magazine,* April 2016.

feet-high from the prison roof to a telegraph pole on the outside. Leary was picked up on a nearby highway by Clayton Van Lydegraf, a former First Lieutenant pilot in World War Two and a veteran Stalinist. Van Lydegraf, who never had any time for the hippie counterculture or LSD, told Leary, 'I was against this whole thing from the start. If it were up to me you'd still be rotting in jail'.* Presumably, Van Lydegraf was given the job of getaway driver, precisely because he didn't look or talk like a hippie. After a few changes of cars and drivers Leary was taken to meet up with the group's leaders, Bernadine Dohrn, Bill Ayers and Mark Rudd. The success of this first part of the mission was celebrated with an LSD tripping session.

The second part of the operation was to spirit Leary and his wife, Rosemary out of the US and send them to Algiers and hook up with Eldridge Cleaver, an exiled leader of the Black Panther Party. The FLN government in Algiers was at the time hospitable to an array of revolutionary exiles from across the world. Leary had always been anti-racist, but had never, until now, identified with revolutionary politics, especially that which embraced armed-struggle. What had changed him in San Luis Obispo prison? One factor was the influence of his wife, Rosemary, who much more than Tim, was a 'natural' radical, was well connected with the more 'extreme' elements of American leftism. When planning to spring Tim from his prison she got him to approve the use of firearms by the rescue team that was being assembled. Another factor was the constant supply of LSD smuggled into prison by Rosemary. According to biographer John Higgs,

> 'By using LSD in prison he imprinted a new reality, and replaced his old beliefs with an outlook that made him better adapted to survive in his new environment... Tim had spent years talking about reprogramming the mind in just this way, yet when he did what he had described, his

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* Quoted in Bryan Burrough, *Days of Rage: America's Radical Underground, the FBI, and the Forgotten Age*.

> audience was bewildered... Tim had simply, to use his own jargon, rebuilt his "reality tunnel"'.*

Leary, facing decades behind bars, had come to believe that Rosemary and the revolutionaries were his only hope for freedom. Therefore his natural pacifism was put into suspension for the duration. Like any actor playing the good guy, Leary's had a mission to fulfil in the cosmic drama: to promote solidarity and co-operation between the hippie counterculture and the Black Revolution.

When Leary appeared to buy the Weather Underground's skyed-out politics, issuing a statement from hiding that, 'To shoot a genocidal robot policeman in defence of life is a sacred act,' he alienated many of his old friends. Ken Kesey, the old Electric-Koolaid-Acid-Tester, published an open letter in response which pleaded more in sorrow than in anger: 'Oh my good doctor, we don't need one more nut with a gun'.†

Leary however, was playing revolution politics as a game. This is clear from an interview he did with Paul Krasner twenty years later:

> '*Krasner*: ..when you escaped from prison, you said, "Arm yourselves and shoot to live. To shoot a genocidal robot policeman in defence of life is a sacred act"
> *Leary*: Yeah! I also said "I'm armed and dangerous." I got that directly from Angela Davis. I thought it was funny to say that.
> *Krasner*: I thought it was the party line from the Weather Underground.
> *Leary*: Well, yeah. I had a lot of arguments with Bernadine Dohrn,
> *Krasner*: They had their own rhetoric. She even praised Charles Manson.
> *Leary*: The Weather Underground were amusing, They were brilliant, Jewish, Chicago kids. They had class and dash and flash and smash. Bernadine was praising Manson

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* John Higgs, *I Have America Surrounded: The Life of Timothy Leary*, p.125.
† Quoted in Lee and Shlain, *Acid Dreams*, p.230.

> for sticking a fork in a victim's stomach. She was just being naughty'. *

With fake passports, Leary and his wife, Rosemary, slipped out of America in disguise and flew to Algeria to meet Eldridge Cleaver. Cleaver had joined the Black Panther Party after serving an eight year sentence in San Quentin prison for rape and attempted murder. Released in 1966, Cleaver became a journalist for *Ramparts* and served as Minister of Information of the Black Panther Party. In 1968 he led an ambush of Oakland police officers in which two officers were wounded and 17-year-old Panther Bobby Hutton was shot to death by police after surrendering. Cleaver fled to Cuba, where he was at first welcomed by the communist authorities. However, when he was joined by Clinton Smith and Byron Booth, who had hijacked a plane from California to Cuba, the hospitality cooled. Fidel Castro, not wanting his island to become a haven for plane-hijackers with dubious (possibly CIA) connections, packed the three of them off to Algeria. As other Black Panther exiles began to congregate in Algiers, Cleaver asked the FLN government of Algeria to provide the US Black Panthers with an 'embassy'. This request was granted shortly before the Learys' arrival there.

Cleaver was impressed by Nixon's naming of Leary as 'the most dangerous man in America'. Leary describes his first meeting with Cleaver at a villa in Algiers, which had been provided by the FLN government:

> 'Eldridge greeted us warmly at the gate, recognising that our presence meant more cards in his hand. As Rosemary and I sat uneasily in the *haute bourgeois* French-provincial living room, Cleaver laid out his plan. He would obtain political asylum for us from the Algerians. Then we'd set up an American government in exile. The Algerians had already recognized the Panthers as the American Liberation Front and ultimately we could swing the entire Third World behind our cause. I suggested that we could represent the non-political counter-culture forces of

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* Paul Krasner, 'A Game of Mind Tennis with Timothy Leary', in Forte (ed.), *Timothy Leary* p.122.

> America. We'd invite dissident groups, draft resisters, anti-war activists, hippies, Weathermen, rock stars, beatniks, bohemians, poets. I agreed that we should form a highly visible, alternative government to the Nixon regime. There was no question that, if we could get a base operating, many counter-culture people would come by to visit. The most effective tactic would be to operate a media centre. If the Algerians will let us set up broadcast facilities, we can start a Radio Free America that would beam over to Europe and the armed forces bases. We could win the respect of the youth and the liberals and the anti-war people in Europe... [for] a popular front of the large majority of Americans who want a peaceful friendly prosperous world'. *

Leary's sentiments were received politely but with sceptical bemusement. Cleaver saw no future for any kind popular front, least of all one composed of the people Leary had in mind. When Leary began receiving visitors – old friends, revolutionary tourists, psychedelic pilgrims and journalists – Cleaver complained that the journalists tended to relegate the Panthers' revolutionary politics to the colourful backdrop of the story of Leary's prison escape.† Anita Hoffman of the Yippies recalled,

> '...I revolted against Cleaver's dictatorial rule, but was surprised to find I had no allies among the obedient lefties I was travelling with. So I escaped by climbing out of window and talking my way out at customs at the airport. Since the Panthers were guests of the Algerians, the Algerians wanted the Panthers' approval to let me leave. But at that point they didn't know I was gone'.‡

Cleaver assured the Algerian government that he could control Leary's drug use and bouts of 'nonsensical political eloquence'. First, Cleaver got Leary to participate in a film shooting session for the Panthers aimed at a US audience. Cleaver wanted Leary to publicly

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* Leary, *Flashbacks*, ps 301-2.

† Higgs, p.127.

‡ Forte, *Timothy Leary*, p.85.

renounce drugs as a distraction from building armed resistance to US imperialism. Leary was diplomatic rather than apologetic:

> 'If taking any drug postpones for ten minutes the revolution, the liberation of our sisters and brothers, our comrades, then taking drugs must be postponed for ten minutes … However, if one hundred FBI agents agreed to take LSD, thirty would certainly drop out'.*

Leary was still committed to fulfilling his promises to the Weather Underground. Now that the escape from prison and flight into exile had been accomplished, it was time for the third part of the mission: to organise a tripping session with Eldridge Cleaver, in the hope that he would became less insular and sectarian; and embrace unity between Black Revolutionaries and hippie radicals such the Weather Underground. Cleaver had actually tripped on LSD with Yippie leaders Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman in Berkeley back in 1968. They had failed to change Cleaver's thinking, but Leary thought it was still worth trying to do so. As he had a good supply of LSD smuggled to him in Algiers, he suggested to Cleaver that they trip together, and Cleaver agreed. The session however, simply aggravated Cleaver's paranoia, and plunged him into a mood of pessimism.

Cleaver, wishing to assure the Algerian government that he was hosting a real anti-imperialist revolutionary, rather than a white American drugs fiend, sent Leary on a Panther-led delegation to the PLO training camps in the Levant. The delegation consisted of Leary, Donald Cox of the Black Panther party, Panther fundraiser Martin Kenner, and Bernadine Dohrn's sister, Jennifer , who represented a sort of 'political wing' of the Weather Underground. The idea was to have Leary appear before the world media at a PLO camp in Jordan alongside Fatah guerrillas, Black Panthers and white American sympathisers. However, when they arrived in Beirut via Cairo they found themselves besieged at their hotel and followed everywhere by the Western press, who had been tipped off about their arrival. The plan to visit Fatah training camps in Jordan and Syria had to be

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* Elaine Mokhtefi, *Algiers, Third World Capital: Freedom Fighters, Revolutionaries, Black Panthers* , Chapter 5.

abandoned when the Lebanese government, under US diplomatic pressure, sent a police squad to escort them to the airport.

Leary and party returned to Cairo. In Cairo, according to Cleaver's then collaborator Elaine Mokhtefi, Leary became 'paranoid and hysterical... uncontrollable... scaling walls, hiding behind buildings, raising his arms and screaming in the streets'. The Algerian ambassador to Egypt put them on a plane back to Algiers. On their return Leary and Rosemary began partying with LSD at the desert oasis of Bou-Saada, much to Cleaver's disapproval. Having recently returned from a conference in North Korea, Cleaver had become a devotee of Kim Il Sung. He now believed that the Panther strategy of uniting with white radicals of the psychedelic counterculture had been mistaken.* And it was not just white hippies that Cleaver wanted to disassociate his movement from. In Leary's words, 'Eldridge invented himself a security crisis. Like Nixon, like Brezhnev':

> 'Everything the Panthers did was in the name of security. We were constantly lectured on the precariousness of our situation; American police were after us. All Algerians were racists. The town was crawling with enemies. Our foes were multiplying. The other national liberation fronts turned out to racist too and riddled with double agents. Even our American allies became deadly rivals one-by-one: Angela Davis, Huey Newton, Stokeley Carmichael – all running-dog lackeys of imperialism'.†

The CIA's top-secret Algeria operation had been set up after Cleaver's arrival in Algiers in 1969. The CIA, as later revealed by Seymour Hersh in the *New York Times* had recruited Black Americans to spy on members of the Black Panther Party both in the United States and in Africa, especially Algeria. One agent gained access to the personal living quarters of Cleaver in Algeria in the late 1960's. Another later boasted to his colleagues that he had managed to penetrate Cleaver's Algerian headquarters 'and sat at the table' with him. The CIA's aim, in the case of the Black Panthers living abroad, was to 'neutralize'

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* Donn Pearce, 'Leary in Limbo', *Playboy*, July 1971.

† Leary, *Flashbacks*, p.304.

them; ‘to try and get them in trouble with local authorities wherever they could’.*

According to Leary, the problem with Cleaver was that he was ‘totally American. He doesn’t want to change the system, he just wants to run it’.† On one occasion Cleaver pulled a gun on Leary and threatened to denounce him to the Algerian authorities for his activities with LSD if a sum of $10,000 was not forthcoming. On 9 January 1971, Cleaver ‘imprisoned’ the Learys, placing them under armed guard. A CIA document dated 12 February 1971 noted:

> 'Panther activities have recently taken some interesting turns. Eldridge Cleaver and his Algiers contingent have apparently become disenchanted with the antics of Tim Leary... Electing to call their actions protective custody, Cleaver and company, on their own authority, have put Tim and Rosemary under house arrest due most probably to Leary's continued use of hallucinogenic drugs'.‡

Tim and Rosemary were fearful about ever getting out of Cleaver’s personal prison. They had good reason to be. Unknown to Leary, months earlier Cleaver had shot dead his fellow exile, Clinton Smith, after accusing him of amorous intentions towards his wife, Kathleen Cleaver. Byron Booth, who witnessed the murder, helped Cleaver bury Smith's body in the mountains and fled Algeria the next day.§

Cleaver’s imprisonment of the Learys came just as a serious split was developing between Cleaver’s faction and the California-base leadership. Panther leaders Huey Newton and David Hilliard wanted the party to focus on community service and avoid any armed actions beyond self-defense; others, such as Cleaver, wanted to continue and extend offensive armed struggle. Some activists had given up on the Black Panther Party and joined the Black Liberation Army. The Panther split became public in mid-February 1971. In the

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* Seymour Hersh, ‘Huge CIA Operation Reported in US Against Anti-War Forces’, *New York Times*, 22 December, 1974; ‘CIA Reportedly Recruited Blacks For Surveillance of Panther Party’, *New York Times*, 17 March 1978.

† Timothy Leary, *Confessions of a Hope Fiend*, p240. Quoted in John Higgs, *I Have America Surrounded*, p.138.

‡ Lee and Shlian, ps.268-9.

§ Mokhtefi, op.sit.

weeks and months that followed, four members of the party in both factions were killed in tit-for-tat shootings. As reports reached the Panthers in the US about the disappearances of Clinton Smith and Byron Booth, suspicions of murder began to spread, and Cleaver began to fear being overthrown by a coup at his own headquarters. The Learys took advantage of Cleaver's distraction and escaped his clutches. Leary made contact with officials of the Algerian government, who told him that they themselves were unhappy about Cleaver's activities in their country and assured the Learys that they could stay for as long as they wished. Now under the protection of the Algerian government, Leary was visited by the English writer and dope-dealer, Brian Barritt, whose rebel status was very different from Cleaver's. Barritt, who had been introduced to LSD by Alex Trocchi in London in the mid-1960s, was an enthusiastic student of 'English Magick' in the 'tradition' of John Dee and Alistair Crowley. He was to become Leary's co-author on the forthcoming book, *Confessions of a Hope Fiend,* in Switzerland, the next stop on the Leary's journey. Leary's archivist, Michael Horowitz, summarises *Confession of a Hope Fiend* as the story of his prison escape flight to exile and 'revolutionary bust' by the Black Panther Party leader 'after he either won or lost the debate on the role of psychedelic drugs in the revolution':

> 'In Algeria, the role of Hassan-i-Sabbah – the founder of the hashishin and the first recorded person to brainwash with euphoric drugs – was not necessarily up for grabs. The Aleister Crowley persona emerged during an acid trip in the Sahara. But survival dictated another space time co-ordinate'*.

Hotel Abyss

In April 1971, Leary accepted an invitation to give a talk at Aarhus university in Copenhagen. The Learys flew first to Geneva and sought advice from his friend, Pierre Benoussan. He advised them to stay in Switzerland because he thought that if they went to Denmark, they were certain to be arrested and deported to the US. Benoussan gave

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* Higgs, ps.139-140.

them the address of Michel Hauchard, arms dealer for the Palestinians, convicted fraudster and jailbird.* Hauchard, as gentleman rogue, felt obliged to help Leary as a persecuted philosopher. He provided the Learys with a chalet at a Lake Geneva ski resort. Thanks to Hauchard's generosity, Rosemary Leary was now able to seek the fertility treatment she needed to become pregnant. Hauchard's largesse had a price. Leary had to promise he would not leave Switzerland and had to sign away in advance half the royalties on the book, *Confessions of a Hope Fiend*.† But for the moment Leary had landed in the lap of luxury, and revolutionary politics was now irrelevant to him. As Higgs puts it,

> 'Indeed, just three months after pledging "eternal solidarity" to the Brazilian Marxists who had escaped from jail and fled to Algiers, he found himself drinking with the Brazilian aristocrats who had jailed them in the first place. "Torture," one of them told him, "was nothing more than an advanced form of acrobatics." By now Tim was quite used to imprinting an entirely new worldview whenever he found himself in a different environment, but rarely was the process as effortless as this'.‡

Hauchard provided the Learys with a lawyer to obtain temporary Swiss residence for them. When, in June 1971, Tim was arrested by the Swiss police to face an extradition request from the US government, the lawyer got him out of prison on health grounds. In December, Leary's appeal against extradition was upheld by the court, on condition that he would keep out of subversive politics and stay away from illegal drugs; the first was easy, the second was out of the question for Leary, although he believed he could take his daily doses of acid discreetly. The downside was that the court ruled he would have to leave Switzerland before the end of the following year, 1972.

In September 1971, Leary got to meet Albert Hoffman, the discoverer of LSD. Hoffman told Leary that it was regrettable that investigations into LSD and psilocybin had 'degenerated' so much

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* Lee and Pratt, ps.340-2.

† Leary, *Flashbacks*, ps.300-310.

‡ Higgs, p.158.

that continuance of psychedelic research in the academic milieu had become impossible:

> 'In this conversation I further objected to the great publicity that Leary sought for his LSD and psilocybin investigations, since he had invited reporters from daily newspapers and magazines to his experiments and had mobilized radio and television. Emphasis was placed on publicity rather than objective information. Leary defended his publicity program because he felt it had been his fateful historic role to make LSD known worldwide. The overwhelming positive effects of such dissemination, above all among America's younger generation, would make any trifling injuries or regrettable accidents as a result of improper use of LSD unimportant in comparison, a small price to pay'.*

David Solomon travelled from England to Switzerland to see Leary and secure a role as an agent negotiating with publishers.† Another arrival in the Learys' Swiss household was Dennis Martino, Leary's hash-smuggling son-in-law from a previous marriage. He was wanted in the US for jumping parole, but in December 1972 made a trip to the US. This should have raised Leary's suspicions, but didn't. Leary and Brian Barritt ventured into music production with German krautrockers. Barritt got Leary into heroin, until after few weeks Leary wisely decided to quit. During this period Leary was constantly on LSD, though could function rationally in his day-to-day interactions. Leary had now decided that 'whereas the space games are survival, power and control, the corresponding time games are sex, dope and magic'.*

By this time Rosemary Woodruff Leary had had enough of Tim's new life and entourage. Rosemary took up with John Schewel, an associate of the Brotherhood of Eternal Love, and spent the next twenty years hiding out in various parts of the world.

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* Albert Hoffman, 'My Meetings With Timothy Leary', in Forte, op.cit. ps.89-90.

† Tendler and May, p.112; Lee and Pratt, ps.340-342.

* 'Prophet on the Lam: Timothy Leary in Exile', in Forte op.cit. p.98.

Leary hooked up with an aristocratic Englishwoman, Joanna Harcourt Smith, who was introduced to him by Hauchard. Meanwhile the US authorities were renewing pressure on the Swiss by drumming up more charges against Leary, accusing him of being 'the godfather of the largest drug-smuggling ring in the world' – the Brotherhood of Eternal Love (the charges were later dropped for lack of evidence).* At the end of 1972 Leary and Joanna moved to Vienna. Joanna wanted to take Leary to Ceylon, where she had rich relatives to put them up. Then, fatefully, Dennis Martino arrived in Vienna. He suggested that rather than head straight for Ceylon, the three of them should go firstly to Afghanistan, where, he assured them, he had Brotherhood of Eternal Love contacts who would help them. Leary, accompanied by Joanna Harcourt-Smith and Dennis Martino arrived in Afghanistan in January 1973. In Kabul, former CIA agent Terrence Burke was now working in Kabul for the US Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs and was monitoring the brothers Aman and Nasrullah Tokhi, who were supplying the Brotherhood of Eternal Love with large shipments of hash. The Afghan authorities provided Burke with copies of American travellers' embarkation and disembarkation cards, so he was thus warned of the impending arrival of the Learys and Martino. Burke arranged for US Embassy staff disguised as Afghan immigration officers to be on hand to confiscate Leary's fake passport. Burke then persuaded the Afghan authorities to deport Leary. Dennis Martino, also a fugitive, struck a deal with Burke in Kabul to become an informer. Or was he one already? What is certain is that Martino, spirited back to California after Leary's deportation from Afghanistan, arranged for at least two dozen of his dope-dealing associates of the Brotherhood to be arrested.*

Eldridge Cleaver left Algeria for France in 1972 and went into hiding. He returned to the USA in 1977 a born-again Christian. After some plea-bargaining and public repentance for his political past he got away with a sentence of 1,200 hours community service for the outstanding assault charge.† His Black Panther rival, Huey Newton,

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* Forte, p.70.

* Higgs, p.223.

† Mokhtefi, op. cit.

came out of prison in 1970. He failed to revive the party and fell into gangsterism and cocaine addiction.

Leary 'Co-operates'

At his trial in March 1973 for the 1970 prison escape, Leary was sentenced to five years imprisonment in addition to the twenty he had been serving. For management of his affairs outside of prison Leary still relied on Joanna Harcourt-Smith. In November, 1973, Leary was transferred from Folsom to Vacaville Prison. There he learned that Martino had become a government snitch and that Joanna was sleeping with him. When Allen Ginsberg met Joanna Harcourt-Smith during a prison visit, he told her he suspected she might be a 'double agent'. In response, Joanna turned to Leary and said 'Oh, he just hates women'. Leary simply threw up his hands in exasperation. But for Leary himself, in this latest reality tunnel informing was taking on a new meaning: Leary, in return for early release, was prepared to talk to the FBI.

On the evidence of Leary's autobiography, the 'Leary Turns Fink' story, which gained wide circulation in the late seventies, was, in part at least, the product of an FBI counter-offensive aimed at blunting the revelations about the Bureau's own illegal actions against dissidents. When a transcript of Leary's testimony was leaked to journalist, Jack Anderson, Leary complained that it made it sound as if he was testifying against anyone who had ever offered him a joint. But the story severely damaged Leary's reputation among his followers. Becoming a political extremist under extreme circumstances might have been understandable; but becoming a renegade fink put him beyond the pale. After the FBI milked Leary for all the information they thought they get, Leary was finally given his freedom in April 1976.

According to Leary, he only wanted to convince the FBI that people like the Weather Underground and Brotherhood of Eternal Love were really just all-American kids who had grown a little too enthusiastic about realising their ideals. Regarding his 'motives' for talking, Leary said that he wanted an 'intelligent, an honourable relationship' with Government institutions:

> ‘So this does not just turn someone over to get out of prison, it’s part of a longer range plan of mine... I intend to be fully active in this country in the next few years however the things turn out... I'm never going to work at it illegally ever again, but I would prefer to work constructively and collaboratively with intelligence and law enforcement people that are ready to forget the past...’*

Leary did talk to the FBI about the Weather Underground and name names, but in the long run the group was not impacted by Leary’s testimony. By the mid-1970s the Weather Underground leadership had grasped the reality that they weren’t going to be able to bomb US Imperialism out of existence. Bill Ayers and Bernadine Dohrn believed they could avoid federal prosecution and lengthy prison sentences because of illegal wire taps and reluctance on the government's part to reveal sources and illegal methods. Ayers and Dohrn favored a strategy of ‘surfacing’ as above ground revolutionaries. Bernadine Dohrn’s sister, Jennifer, organised an umbrella organization of radical groups which was named the Prairie Fire Committee (inspired by Mao Zedong’s polemic against ‘pessimism’: ‘A Single Spark Can Start a Prairie Fire‘).

In 1977 a pamphlet appeared entitled *The Split of the Weather Underground Organization – Struggling Against White and Male Supremacy.* This contained an abject ‘confession’ by Bernadine Dohrn, admitting to charges of racial and sexual chauvinism, and ‘opportunism’. An article by Clayton Van Lydegraf, ‘In Defense of Prairie Fire’, indicated that the new ‘line’ was a very orthodox Marxist-Leninism committed to supporting armed actions. But Van Lydegraf’s takeover of what was left of the Weather Underground’s military structure proved disastrous. Since 1969 the FBI had largely failed to penetrate the group, but they soon succeeded in doing so when the Bureau’s Weather hunters infiltrated a couple of undercover agents into the West Coast Weather Underground Organization as firearms instructors; one of whom actually moved in with Van

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* Timothy Leary, *The Politics of Psychopharmacology* (Ronin Publishing: 2009), p.110.

Lydegraf as his housemate. In 1977, Van Lydegraf, and several Weather Underground members were arrested for plotting to bomb the offices of a California state senator and got two-year prison sentences. This essentially finished the Weather Underground. All three of the groups Leary had operated with during his 1971-73 fugitive period – the Brotherhood of Eternal Love, the Black Panthers and the Weather Underground – were broken up largely within that timespan. In between 1970 when he escaped prison and 1976, when he was released, Leary created for himself one 'reality tunnel' after another: first with the Weather Underground, then with Cleaver's Black Panthers, then with Hauchard, then finally with the FBI. As John Higgs puts it:

> 'Enlightenment thinkers assumed that everyone operates in the same reality, but that, Leary believed, was not true on a practical level. Concepts, relationships and events were now relative, and could only be really understood when analysed alongside the reality tunnels that created them'.*

As Leary said of his first LSD trip with Michael Hollingshead ten years earlier,

> 'From that day I have never lost the sense that I am an actor, surrounded by characters, props and sets for the comic drama being written in my brain'.*

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* John Higgs, *I Have America Surrounded: The Life of Timothy Leary*, ps.46-48.
* Leary, Flashbacks, p.119.

11 - Operation Julie: the Hunters and the Hunted

S.T.U.F.F.

The US authorities had successfully broken the Brotherhood of Eternal Love. But there was something happening on the other side of the Atlantic that the slow-moving British police hadn't quite cottoned onto: an undiscovered LSD conspiracy which they came to believe originated with the Brotherhood's Trans-Atlantic operations. It began in November 1974, when Detective Inspector Richard Lee, then head of the Thames Valley Police Drug Squad, was running Operation STUFF – 'Stop Unlawful Free Festivals'. For the first half of the seventies, Lee's team of cops-pretending-to-be-hippies attended the Windsor and Reading festivals every year and in one instance infiltrated an undercover officer onto the festival organising committee. From their reports, it was clear that LSD was very much in demand and that there was a lot of it about; so much in fact that Lee, couldn't accept the view of the Home Office and Customs - based on annual seizures of 20,000 tabs nationwide - that 'the use of LSD in Britain was restricted to a small number of people'.

Lee approached the Central Drugs Intelligence Unit (CDIU), a non-operational body newly set up in 1973 at Scotland Yard to collate information on the British drug scene and store it on a computerised database. When Lee specifically asked for intelligence on LSD, CDIU 'denied having any information which showed LSD to be a problem'. Lee thought, 'To be told flatly that there was nothing did not make sense'.* He was to learn eventually that the Home Office drugs inspector Bing Spear, had reported as early as 1971 that large amounts of ergotamine tartrate had been shipped to America by Druce and Craze's company, Alban Feeds. Spear also found that LSD microdots,

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* Lee and Pratt, ps.17-18.

seized across the world, 'originated from one common source which, in all probability, was somewhere in Britain'.*

In 1975, Martin Pritchard, one of Lee's undercover officers in the STUFF operation, arranged the arrest of a dealer in LSD named John Redfearn. He was granted bail in the hope that observing his movement and connections would provide them with intelligence about those higher in the supply chain. Redfearn absconded, but his movements were traced to a hippie commune near Tregaron. This was the first hint of a Welsh connection, and it was strengthened when Lee learned from Dyfed-Powys police that LSD discovered in Wales was stronger and more pure than in other regions. A dealer arrested in Australia with 1500 microdots turned and informed the police that the acid had been produced in a lab 'somewhere in Wales' and that he had been supplied by one Richard Burden, at his restaurant, the Last Resort, in London. This information was duly sent on to London. Burden was in fact one of Henry Todd's main distributors.†

Later in 1975, Lee discovered that the Central Drugs Intelligence Unit had been withholding information from him. He appealed to higher authority, who forced the handover of the files on LSD. It then became obvious to him, why the CDIU had not wanted anyone else to see them:

> 'For they contained a number of leads pointing to an LSD conspiracy in the United Kingdom, but unfortunately the information had been in the hands of the unit for two years and almost nothing done about it… the information had been withheld from all drug squads except the Metropolitan, and when they failed to act on it, no one else had the chance'.‡

Lee discovered that an investigation as far back as 1971 had been getting near to the truth but suddenly collapsed when the gang Thames Valley Police Drug Squad and Customs were watching was robbed of money and drugs by officers of the London Metropolitan Police. According to Detective Constable Martyn Pritchard of the Operation

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* Lee and Pratt, p.31.

† Lee and Pratt, ps.52-3; Ebenezer, ps.44-47.

‡ Lee and Pratt, p.47.

Julie squad, the 1971 investigation did however reveal enough to register suspicions ‘that a big LSD factory was in business’.* And according to Lee, ‘the customs files also suggested that substantial corrupt payments had been made to London police officers for protection by the LSD distributors. This made the necessity for secrecy even more important’. All this pointed to the likelihood that the CDIU had tried to cover up the corruption in the Met drugs squad. Lee was now discovering how embarrassing his own enquiries were becoming, and not just for the Met; for he was given the vague but forceful warning from on high, ‘that he was not to do anything that might embarrass Her Majesty’s Government’.†

For corrupt officers of the London Met, as described by Pritchard, cannabis dealers, unlike acid-heads, were the low-hanging fruit. The cannabis import trade of the early 1970s was carried on various networks, bringing in hash, grass and cannabis oil from various parts of the world. At the distribution level, there were inevitable conflicts – sometimes violent – between rival gangs: rip-offs, turf wars, suspicions of informing, etc., all of which could be exploited by the police. Cannabis stolen in faked-up arrests was sold on by bent officers to their criminal associates or informers. Busting acid-dealers was harder work, because acid shipments, compared to cannabis, were very small in bulk and could be transported more easily, and stashed more securely. Furthermore, unlike the diffuse world of cannabis importers and distributors, the British acid underground of the early 1970s initially consisted of a single network, professionally organised, trained for secrecy, and selling British-made product.

The acid underground's problems with the law began, not with anything to do with LSD, but with two key acid-heads doing a bit of cannabis smuggling 'on the side'. In 1973 Canadian Gerry Thomas and American David Solomon organised a cannabis-smuggling operation that up-ended when Thomas was caught entering Canada with seven kilos of hash. Thomas was carrying a business card with the address of a London warehouse in which he had stashed his personal

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* Martyn Pritchard and Ed Laxton, *Busted*, ps.169-170 .

† Lee and Pratt, ps.117.

belongings, some equipment for making cannabis oil, and some incriminating documents. Released on bail, he telephoned Solomon and asked him to remove all the material before the British police could get their hands on it. Solomon removed Thomas's belongings from the warehouse and destroyed all of them. Thomas was furious and threatened to grass on Solomon and all his contacts if he wasn't compensated. Solomon, in turn, threatened Thomas with dire retribution if he grassed. Relations were broken off, but from then on, Solomon, Kemp and friends could never be sure that Thomas hadn't grassed. As it happened he had; and the British acid underground principals were doomed from that moment – in June 1973 – even though it would take the British police another four years to catch them.

Thomas had told Canadian police that he had knowledge of a major LSD production ring in Britain. He named Richard Kemp, Christine Bott, a man he simply knew as 'Henry' (Todd), and David Solomon. He also identified Kemp's car as a red Range Rover. The Canadian police passed all this information on the Central Drugs Intelligence Unit in London. Detective Inspector Godfrey of the Metropolitan Police intelligence unit followed it up and found that Kemp had been identified in a 1970 Special Branch report as an associate of Ronald Stark.*

Godfrey and Detective Inspector Charles O'Hanlon of the Central Drugs Intelligence Unit flew to Canada in spring 1974 to interview Gerry Thomas. O'Hanlon however, was removed from the investigation when he was suspended and subsequently sentenced to eight years imprisonment for receiving corrupt payments from pornographers during an earlier stint with the Metropolitan Obscene Publications Squad. At this time the Met's own drug squad was reeling from a corruption scandal that resulted in six officers going to prison for taking payments from cannabis dealers. Lee also mentions £10,000 in bribes paid by an Anglo-Dutch drugs ring to police officers between 1971 and 1974 to ensure those charged could get out on bail

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* Andy Roberts, *Albion Dreaming: A popular history of LSD in Britain*, p. 216. Ref. National Archives, Home Office file HO 319/315.

and ‘disappear’. Worse still, all of the files on the Anglo-Dutch investigation had been destroyed.*

DI Derek Godfrey, according to Lee's undercover officer, Stephen Bentley, was the ‘only Metropolitan police officer Lee trusted’. It was Godfrey who initiated an investigation of David Solomon’s trip to Switzerland in 1971 for a meeting with Timothy Leary to help secure a publishing deal for a book about his life on-the-run, *Confessions of Hope Fiend*. But the Metropolitan Police then, as Lee put it, ‘botched’ a raid on Solomon’s London home, and failed to find any illegal substances. As a result of Gerry Thomas' information, the Central Drugs Intelligence Unit at Scotland Yard did take ‘some interest’ in the whereabouts and activities of Richard Kemp and Christine Bott, but couldn't find them and soon gave up looking.†

The Chase

In September 1974, in north Wales, Richard Kemp crashed his red Range Rover, which was then impounded by the police. Unaware that his name was logged into the system as a 'person of interest', Kemp carelessly produced his driver’s documents at Welshpool police station. As a result, the police were now able to place Kemp, their main suspect, in Wales – which was where the acid seemed to be coming from. In the car the police found a torn up map of various locations and a piece of paper bearing the words ‘hydrazine tartrate’, a substance used in LSD production. As evidence accumulated from other sources, Richard Lee succeeded in calling a police conference in Swindon, in February 1976, to assemble Britain’s first nationwide, multi-force special squad, code-named Operation Julie. As operational commander of the squad, based in Devizes, Wiltshire, Lee mounted a massive surveillance operation to monitor people suspected of involvement with the ‘Microdot Gang’.

One centre of distribution was identified as Y Glyn, Llanddewi Brefi. This was the home of Alston Hughes, known as ‘Smiles’. Undercover officers Stephen Bentley and Eric Wright were assigned

* Lee and Pratt, p.50, p.125-6 and p.216; B Cox, J Shirley and M Short, *The Fall of Scotland Yard*.

† Stephen Bentley, *Undercover: Operation Julie - The Inside Story*.

to infiltrate Smiles's milieu. Bentley, who spent months of heavy drinking, smoking weed and (just once) snorting coke in the company of Smiles, convinced himself that his target harboured no suspicions that he was an undercover cop. Smiles for his part, is adamant that he knew all along. Andy Roberts writes:

> 'Smiles, in 2016, told me of his initial meeting with Bentley, "Anyway, these two herberts walk in. Instinctively I knew they were cops and said, 'what'll it be officers? Two halves as you're on duty'" and considers their flustered retorts, the exact words of which he has forgotten, to have confirmed his instinct.'*

Stephen Bentley (alias the hippie, Steve Jackson) rejects this anecdote as 'secondhand hearsay'. As his rejection is insistent; and since, after all, he was 'there', his comments to me are worth quoting at length:

> 'Perhaps he did say that to Roberts. But it's not true and that's why it irks me to see this story of Smiles repeated in books concerning Operation Julie. Please allow me to show you why Smiles' story is a face-saving fabrication and one that I feel compelled to discredit...'

To give a few examples,

> 'Why didn't Smiles warn anyone in the drug distribution network? Clearly, he didn't as the telephone intercepts would surely have disclosed the warning. Why didn't that intercept record any suspicions he harboured about Eric (my undercover partner) and me?... Why did he supply Jackson [Bentley] with cannabis and cocaine? Why give Jackson a Christmas gift of cannabis? Why were Jackson and Walker (Eric Wright's undercover name) frequent welcome and invited guests in his home? Why did Smiles choose to be a regular heavy-session drinking buddy of Jackson?... Why did he often talk about drug dealing with Jackson?

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* Andy Roberts, Review of 'Undercover: Operation Julie – the Inside Story by Stephen Bentley'. Psychedelic Press UK. http://psypressuk.com/2016/09/15/undercover-operation-julie-the-inside-story-by-stephen-bentley/

> Why has he made claims that he was told of Jackson's identity and yet did nothing about it it?'*

Bentley and his colleague Eric Wright's role-play with Smiles went on for the best part of year. During that time Operation Julie picked up further historical intelligence. The 'Henry' that Gerry Thomas had told them about was identified as Henry Barclay Todd of Fitzgeorge Avenue, west London after a long trawl through police records, applications for driving licenses and passports.†

After a year of undercover surveillance by Bentley and his colleagues, using telephone taps and surveillance technology supplied by the intelligence services, the police successfully located the two laboratories – Kemp's in Wales and Todd's in London – and identified virtually all of the principals. It had taken Inspector Lee three years to fully discover that since 1970, an illicit organisation in Britain had been manufacturing around, '£20m worth of tiny LSD tablets [a year] and selling them to two-thirds of the world'; and that 'in the three years between the end of Operation Bel and the start of the Operation Julie... over 100 million dosages of LSD were manufactured in Britain'.‡

It is striking that the principals of the British acid underground were in almost universal denial that they were being watched, despite numerous indicators: clumsy police surveillance; botched raids on the homes of Solomon in London, and Alston Hughes in Wales, which found nothing; police radio messages which could be heard on the FM radios of their targets; and friendly tip-offs from friendly Welsh locals about 'hippie cops'. The principals chose to ignore the signs and carry on, thinking they could race against time and get out of the business with a tidy nest egg before it was too late.

It was too late. After a year of Operation Julie, Lee was ready to strike. On 26 March 1977, Operation Julie mobilised 800 officers to arrest 130 people in a nationwide round-up of suspects. In the post-arrest interrogations the accumulated evidence the Julie squad had collected on their targets was, for most of them, overwhelming. Leaf

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* Stephen Bentley, Review of D Black's Acid Outlaws. Goodreads, September 26, 2019.

†Lee and Pratt,pp. 84-88.

‡ Lee and Pratt,pp. 12-18.

Fielding, in a gesture which he hoped would get him a lighter sentence (it didn't), agreed to show Bentley and Pritchard his stash in the woods of over a hundred thousand microdots, which they celebrated as a 'record breaker'. Fielding claims that he warned the squad not to touch the contaminated carpet that had been rolled up in the lab at Seymour Road. He claims that the warning was ignored and three officers who examined the carpet were heavily dosed with LSD; and that one of them reported to Fielding just how good the experience had been until he and his colleagues were hauled off for 'psychiatric' treatment at a Kingston hospital.* Stephen Bentley disputes Fielding's claim about a warning:

> 'He couldn't have done. Fielding was arrested the day after the occupants of the Seymour Road lab. The search had already taken place by that time. In any event, Fielding had no access to Seymour Road and probably didn't know the lab's location owing to the cell-like structure in place designed to separate people involved in the manufacture and distribution. It was like the kind of structure used by terrorists'.†

The encounter between Richard Kemp and Julie squad boss, Detective Chief Superintendent Dennis Greenslade, reveals the gulf between two opposing views of reality and between two different *times*. Greenslade is described by Bentley as a 'glory hunter' who was placed at the top of the Operation Julie command structure 'to spy on Lee on behalf of the establishment'.‡ In the interview room Greenslade talked like a colonial policeman trying to put a coolie opium pedlar in his place; Kemp responded like an immodest intellectual having to endure an ignorant bureaucrat.

> *Kemp*: You know nothing. You represent political repression.
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> *Greenslade*: It's all very well to assume that people have a wonderful time on your LSD. We have to clean up the mess. You have no appreciation of the amount of people

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* Fielding, p. 49.

† Stephen Bentley, Review of D Black's Acid Outlaws. Goodreads, September 26, 2019.

‡ Bentley, *Undercover*, p.192.

all over the country having personal hallucinations. *Kemp*: You know nothing.

Greenslade: I have travelled in the Far East and seen people on opium.

Kemp: The opiates are something else. Acid is different.

Greenslade: Whatever it is it is against the law.

Kemp: The law, and you, represent political repression.*

When asked what he spent his money on, Kemp said he had supported rock festivals such as Windsor and Glastonbury, and had given money to Release, the organisation set up to help defendants in drugs cases. Kemp was asked if he had, 'supported politics,'

Kemp: Yes.

Greenslade: What organisations?'

Kemp: 'Head politics.'

Greenslade: The names of the groups?

Kemp: I don't want to discuss it.†

Kemp's partner, Christine Bott, told the Julie Squad interrogators that she thought, 'cannabis and LSD if used properly lifts the veil and one sees the truth'; that, 'we weren't in for the money… I felt it was my contribution to alter society… I believe in the Eternal Love thing – similar to Leary's'. Bott likened herself to Rose Dugdale, another woman doctor, who however, was committed to the armed struggle of the Irish Republican Army, rather than the Brotherhood of Eternal Love. Bott insisted she was 'not into guns', and that she thought, 'given the chance to use acid, people would be happier'. She asked her interviewing officer, 'Have you ever tried acid?' The officer, part of a team whose undercover officers had shared the lifestyles of drug-taking hippies, was startled by the mischievous question topping off this eloquent display of sweet reason. He replied that he had not taken acid, to which she responded, 'Well you ought to...'*

Lee later told Steve Abrams that since they had very little evidence on David Solomon, if he had kept his mouth shut in response to police questioning he would have escaped conviction.† Solomon's

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* Andy Roberts, *Albion Dreaming*, p.222.

† Lee and Pratt, p.290.

* Lee and Pratt,pp.275-6

† Roberts, p.224.

longtime American associate, Paul Arnaboldi, was more fortunate; having left Wales for Spain just before the raids, he stayed away and was never prosecuted.

Following the arrests, the police calculated there were about fifteen million trips stashed or still in circulation. According to Fielding, this was an exaggeration; there was only about half that amount, though at seven or so million, still a hell of a lot. Whatever, this was a problem for the police as they had been in a position to bust the production labs for the last year, but had held off to investigate the distribution chains. Leaf Fielding says that the ‘tall tales’ spread by the police about the 'killer drug' LSD also served to ‘obscure the embarrassing fact that they’d watched us for years while we made and distributed millions of LSD tablets... and had signally failed to find the bulk of our acid.’*

Again, Stephen Bentley offers a differing opinion, referring to ‘Fielding’s inane point about the Julie squad permitting them all to continue distributing LSD until the busts in March 1978 after we had tracked Kemp to the Welsh lab in May 1976’. Bentley insists: ‘That was the brief: to take out the manufacturing *and* distribution networks. The latter took time and the gathering of a mountain of evidence through surveillance’.

Richard Kemp had one big secret he had no intention of giving up. Encased in concrete under a stove at his cottage in Wales was a box containing 1.2 kilos of pure LSD crystal, enough for six million trips, with a sell-by date well into the next century. Police searches of his property had missed it. Christine Bott had tried to put the police off by showing them where the tableting molds were buried in the garden. In November 1977 however, the police, acting on information received, went back to the cottage and dug up Richard Kemp's stash of acid crystal. Fielding says, ‘With promises of preferential treatment, they persuaded one of Richard's lieutenants to go to work for them. The turncoat was able to worm out the location of Richard’s stash.’* A plea bargain deal with the turncoat was approved by the Home

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* Fielding,pp.63-64.
* Fielding, p.119.

Secretary.* According to Andy Roberts, whose anonymous source was a defendant in the Julie trial, Kemp believed at the time that David Solomon was the informer.† But Solomon got a sentence of ten years, and had to serve most of it – tough treatment for a 52-year old veteran of World War Two. The identity of the snitch may possibly lie in a Home Office that is locked until the year 2062.

Dr Mark Tcharney acted as courier for Solomon's sub-distributor 'Zani' alias Izchak Sheni in Amsterdam. According Stephen Bentley, an informant who believed Zani to be an Israeli Mossad agent also claimed that Mossad supplied the CIA with some of this LSD.

Show-trial

Solomon, remanded in prison before the trial, wrote to his friend Lee Harris, editor of *Home Grown* magazine, suggesting that it was time for the LSD counterculture to treat the Julie defendants as political prisoners facing a show trial:

> 'It seems morally unthinkable that famous pop artists and groups—who owe much to Alice – would not cough up. Everyone from Bob Dylan to the Stones, Lennon, McCartney et alia infinitum should be asked for sizeable contributions to help pay for our immense legal bill and keep our families fed and housed'.*

There were a few voices of dissent in the mainstream media. One of them, 'Dick Tracy' (John May) in the *New Musical Express* (NME) commented:

> 'It has been standard practice in the British and American media for many years now to distort the true nature of the drug LSD. Medical research into the subject has been officially frowned on, but nevertheless there is a considerable body of evidence available, enough to refute most of the basic untruths. Needless to say, medical facts were ignored in favour of selling

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* Ebenezer, p.130.

† Andy Roberts, p.223; refers to police report in National Achives file, HO 319/315.

* Roberts, p.226.

> newspapers. Operation Julie provided the press with a field day, allowing them to dust off all the old cliches and trot them out into print'.*

The article was well-placed, in that the *NME* at the time was the paper most favoured by punk rockers. Although punk provided the impetus for the very successful Rock Against Racism carnivals, contempt for 'old hippies' (and their drippy music) was almost universal amongst the young punks. On 8 March 1978, 29 defendants were handed down prison sentences totalling 170 years. The sentences for the principal defendants amounted to 111 years:

Richard Kemp (33), chemist at the Plas Llysin lab: 13 years.

David Solomon (52), Kemp's raw materials supplier: 10 years.

Henry Barclay Todd (32), formerly Kemp's marketing manager, later in charge of the laboratory at Seymour Road, London: 10 years.

Brian Cuthbertson (28) Todd's distributor: 11 years.

Dr Andrew Munro (29) Todd's chemist: 10 years.

Russell Spencely (27) Todd's distributor: 10 years.

Dr. Christine Bott (32) Kemp's partner: 9 years.

Nigel 'Leaf Fielding' (29) Todd's tableter and distributor: 8 years.

Alston Hughes ('Smiles') (30) Todd's distributor at Llandewi Brefi, Wales: 8 years.

Martin Annable (29), Todd's distributor: 6 years.

Richard Burden (26), Todd's distributor for London and Amsterdam: 6 years.

David Brown Todd (23), Henry Todd's brother and helper: 6 years.

Anthony Dalton (32) distributor: 5 years.

Dr. Mark Tcharney (24) Kemp's courier and distributor: 3 years.

Douglas Flannagan (28) Todd's distributor: 2 years.

Kemp's partner, Christine Bott was a respected NHS doctor in her local community. Some of the other leading players' wives and girlfriend confessed to 'participation' such as passing on telephone

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* NME, 18 March, 1978. http://hqinfo.blogspot.co.uk/2007/04/inside-dope-operation-julie-revisited.html)

messages, and walked with suspended sentences. But Bott, who carried a copy of Timothy Leary's *Politics of Ecstasy* around with her during the trial, refused to pretend she had been pressurised by Kemp or had 'turned a blind eye' to his activities. She spoke from the dock about the positive aspects of LSD use. 'If I thought there was a crime', she said. 'I thought it had more to do with making money than making LSD'. Justice Park handed her a cruel and unjust sentence of nine years. As Andrew Munro put it, 'Bott got nine years for making sandwiches. I got ten years for making acid'. In an 8000-word statement written for use in his defence, but not used in court, Richard Kemp said,

> 'It has been my experience and that of many of those I know, that LSD helps to make one realise that happiness is a state of mind and not a state of ownership'.

And,

> 'We have been hunted down, not because of few bad trips or LSD-associated deaths, but because of the dramatic political effect we have been having'.*

As John May put it, writing on the Julie trial in the *New Musical Express* in 1977:

> 'Perhaps the saddest aspect of the whole affair is the lack of support and interest from the 'hip' or head community... But a few short years ago Kemp and Co would have been hailed as ''psychedelic outlaws.'' Now it seems most people are content to accept the official word on the subject and go back to their Bovril and bedroom slippers. On the other hand, many people I spoke to were beside themselves with anger at the whitewash job performed on the affair'.*

The nationwide Operation Julie arrests of 130 suspected producers and distributors of LSD on 26 March 1977 was equivalent of taking out the central committee of a political party and all of its regional organisers. It is possible to a see parallels between the fortunes of the

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* *Cambrian News*, 17 March 1978. Quoted by Roberts, ps.234-5.

*NME, 18 March, 1978. http://hqinfo.blogspot.co.uk/2007/04/inside-dope-operation-julie-revisited.html)

British Acid underground and the British radical ‘New Left’: both had a mostly university-educated 'cadre'; both had their origins in the radicalism of the 1960s, and wanted radical change; and both, by the end of the 1970s had signally failed to bring it about.

An Inspector Calls on RD Laing

As the Operation Julie investigation was winding down, Detective Chief Inspector Richard Lee contacted RD Laing and Steve Abrams through Bing Spear at the Home Office to suggest a ‘social’ get-together. Lee and Sergeant Allen Buxton, a former drummer with Georgie Fame’s Blue Flames, came round to Laing’s home and announced that although both Laing and Abrams had been ‘in the frame’ at one stage in the investigation, they were now happily off the hook. The police had been interested in both Abrams and Laing because of their long time association with David Solomon. Solomon’s former partner-in-crime, Gerry Thomas, had told Canadian police that Solomon, ‘was a member of an exclusive intellectual circle surrounding Dr Ronald D Laing, a top psychiatrist’, and that Christine Bott had attended Laing’s seminars.* That, apparently had been enough for the Metropolitan Police drug squad to arrest RD Laing in 1977. According to Steve Abrams, Lee told Laing that the Met had been acting independently of his operation and that someone in the Met had it in for the doctor:

> ‘I remember Laing calling me up to say he had been arrested; he stayed the night and then went off to court with me the next morning. He was saying, “but I’m a famous psychiatrist, they can’t do this to me”’.

The Metropolitan Police seized about 150 bottles of Czechoslovak LSD, each containing small one-dose units of 150 µg. These had been supplied to Laing on license by the Ministry of Health to use with his patients, so he was in legal possession. Also the LSD in the bottles turned out to be inert due to age; Laing had forgotten about them. The case against him was dropped and he was awarded £500 costs.

Inspector Lee wanted Laing to explain how such intelligent people as those he had just put behind bars could have become

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* Lee and Pratt, p.49 and p.140.

involved with the LSD trade. During a heavy whisky-drinking session, a lively and frank conversation ensued about psychiatry and the politics of LSD and cannabis, in which the officers were thoroughly briefed on what Abrams and Laing saw as the dysfunctional drug policy of the Government. As Lee and Buxton staggered into the night, arguing amongst themselves, Abrams and Laing mimicked the parliamentary chant: 'Resign! Resign!' Abrams got a telephone call late the next afternoon telling him that Lee and his driver had both resigned from the police force - as did several other officers of the Julie Squad.*

Operation Julie and 'Terrorist Connections'

Stephen Bentley, undercover officer in the Operation Julie investigation, says in his memoirs:

> 'If we had been permitted to really dig deep then who knows what we may have discovered? There were at the time unsubstantiated links to a now-deceased member of the British Royal Family,* Mossad and the CIA. Certainly a man called Stark was of great interest to us. Perhaps, therein lies the real reason we were stopped in our tracks. There again, we may have found ourselves in a different league!'†

Bentley also mentions an 'IRA link' that was not investigated because of failure to tie up 'loose ends'. After publishing some of his memoirs on a blog, Bentley was contacted by a reader who, 'distinctly recalls' that in June 1972 an 'IRA volunteer' named James McCann, accompanied by David Solomon, visited his father's house in Anglesey, North Wales with a view to buying the property. Bentley's correspondent, who was a boy at the time, 'described and witnessed this [IRA] volunteer [McCann] as "going mental" at his father...

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* Interview with Steve Abrams. His account was later corroborated by Laing's son, Adrian, in his book: *RD Laing - a Biography*, pp. 196-7.

* The story is that someone close to Princess Margaret was 'in the frame' as an LSD distributor, but was tipped off before the Julie raids to 'protect' Her Royal Highness.

† Bentley,pp.208-216.

Solomon calmed the Irishman down and they left'. The documentary evidence consists of a letter written by Solomon in London on June 8,1972 to the correspondent's late father:

> 'Just a note in line with my promise to get in touch with you as soon as I could gather my "clan" together for a group decision regarding your house and property. I deeply regret that I was unable to get my people together on this... to swing all the money... I have been in many parts of this world and have known people both high and low: you are an original and I do not rate you below any man I have ever met. So I do hope that my inability to swing this thing does not alter my having found a friend, a fellow poacher of the wilds of the universe'.*

Bentley says, on the strength of this correspondence, 'It appears that Solomon, Kemp and Bott paid my correspondent's father a visit'. This assumes that the 'clan' is a reference to Kemp and Bott. But, as Solomon had a number of associations – Stark for example – the reference must be regarded as uncertain, if not unfounded.

Solomon's letter to Anglesey is placatory, flattering and reads like an exercise in damage limitation (obviously he wouldn't have wanted McCann's threats being reported to the police). The image of McCann 'going mental' is consistent with the impressions of everyone else who was familiar with his behaviour, including his partner-in-hash-smuggling, Howard Marks, famous as 'Mr Nice.'

James Joseph McCann was a self-proclaimed 'republican' and 'anarchist'. But in the 1960s he had been a fraudster and, at one time, an enforcer for slum landlord and gangster, Nicholas Hoogstratten, in London and Brighton. In 1970, McCann began hanging around the international revolutionary tourist set who met at Queen's University, Belfast. The visitors included Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman of the American Yippies (Youth International Party), and the singer, Phil Ochs.*

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* Facsimile of Solomon's letter. https://www.expatinbacolod.com/undercover-operation-julie/operation-julie-terrorists-spies-royalty/

* Bentley,pp.208-216.

In London, in February 1971, McCann gate-crashed a meeting of the hippie *Frendz* magazine in Notting Hill, brandishing a firearm and challenging the hippies to publish the 'real story' on the Rebellion in the Six Counties of Northern Ireland. Jill Marcuson, who was there, recalled in Jonathan Green's book, *Days in the Life* that, by 1971, *Frendz* had become: 'much more political and less hippie'. McCann claimed to be part of an underground movement called 'Free Belfast,' which supposedly represented a growing anarchist/hippie tendency within the armed rebellion of the 'No-Go' areas in the Six Counties. Jill Marcuson said that McCann 'divided the office into two camps. I found I wasn't a hippie at that point. We were totally taken in by McCann. He was quite charismatic, more than most'. As a result Alan Marcuson, editor of the magazine, interviewed Jim McCann who told him that there was a fully-fledged 'anarchist' movement in the Six Counties, called the 'Belfast Liberation Front', without realising that it only existed in McCann's imagination.

(Alan Marcuson, who was dealing hashish to help keep his magazine afloat financially, was sufficiently enamoured Jim McCann to soon go into business with him and alleged IRA contacts at Shannon Airport to smuggle in hash from the Middle East; an enterprise which would also employ the talents of Howard Marks, Graham Plinston, and Frendz co-editor, Charles Radcliffe).

McCann next organised a trip to Belfast for a group of *Frendz* staff and alternative press people. In late March 1971, McCann was holding court with former *International Times* editor Felix de Mendelssohn, American photographer Joe Stevens and Irish journalist Pete McCartan in the common room of Belfast Queen's University. To everyone's horror, McCann suddenly pulled a sawn-off shotgun and threw a Molotov cocktail. This led to a chase by a passing plain-clothes patrol of the Royal Ulster Constabulary followed by an armed stand-off. McCann surrendered and the four of them were arrested and remanded to Crumlin Road gaol. Jill Marcuson and other anarchists present in Belfast were also arrested. Incredibly, McCann managed to break out of the prison by sawing through the cell bars. He referred to himself from then on as the 'shamrock pimpernel'.

A 'police source' told the London *Evening Standard* the next day, 'We feel we have smashed an international ring of anarchists who came here for the sole purpose of spreading communal strife and using the situation in Ulster to their own evil ends'. This police

propaganda actually served to feed the myth perpetrated by McCann of a popular armed anarchist movement in the Six Counties. But except for McCann (who fled), all of the ‘anarchists’ were released without charge or acquitted.* One of them, Felix de Mendelssohn, described McCann as ‘one of the craziest and most dangerous men I have ever met’. Alan Marcuson, who worked on *Frendz* for 28 issues, from 1969-71, says it all ended that day, ‘when everyone was in Belfast’. He had an appointment to meet John Lennon in Apple's offices to ask for finance for *Frendz*, but en route he passed a newspaper headline which said, 'Ten in Anarchist Bomb Gang'. ‘It was Felix and Jim McCann, Jilly and Joe Stevens. And I walked into this meeting white as a sheet. I didn't get as far as asking him for money’.*

At this time (1971) the Metropolitan Police Bomb Squad in London was hunting a group of bombers called the Angry Brigade. Their attacks on ‘symbols of oppression’ began in 1968 with a bombing of the Portuguese Airline offices and a machine-gun attack on the Spanish Embassy building. The Angry Brigade's actions were for some time blacked out by the mainstream press but the underground press, including *Frendz* and *International Times*, did publish their communiques, and as a result came under police scrutiny themselves. By 1971, the Angry Brigade had blasted their way into the mainstream media with their bomb attacks on the home of the Conservative Employment Minister, Robert Carr, and on the National Police Computer Centre at Hendon. Dick Pountain, who also wrote for *Frendz*, went to deliver his copy one day: ‘Alan (Marcuson) said, “We've had a communiqué from the Angry Brigade, I know someone who knows them and I want to set up a meeting this afternoon.” And I nearly had the squitters’. Pountain spent all afternoon convincing Marcuson that this was not a good idea’.†

The Angry Brigade took inspiration from the Spanish anarchists then fighting General Franco, but their communiqués called

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* *IT* (formerly *International Times*) issue 102, 22 April-6 May.

* Jonathan Green, *Days in the life: voices from the English underground, 1961-1971*, p.363.

† Ibid. p.250.

for the smashing of ‘spectacles’, thus echoing the Situationists. This slipup helped the Metropolitan Police Bomb Squad to track the Angry Brigade within the radical milieu and arrest the core membership in 1972. In Steve Abrams' view, the security services would have been interested in the *Frendz* collective from the beginning in 1969, ‘What with Stark, McCann, the Angry Brigade being involved, it was perfectly reasonable from MI5's point of view to send somebody in to Frendz magazine to find out what the hell was going on’.

Ronald Stark met the solicitor, Bernie Simons, who was representing Mendelssohn, before the trial in Belfast. Over lunch with Simons at the Oxford and Cambridge Club, Stark offered to help out financially, though the offer never came to anything. Simons, who also represented Howard Marks, told Abrams that Stark took some interest in McCann. Stark had first met the group producing *Frendz* magazine in 1969. Developments around the magazine from 1969-71 suggested to Abrams that something fishy was going on:

> ‘Dick Pountain takes Stark off to *Frendz* magazine. It *appears* that Stark takes over the funding; there's an overpaid editor, a staff of seventeen, a fleet of hire cars and they never sold more than 5000 copies an issue. Now you have this magazine acting as spokesman for the Angry Brigade, and involved with Jim McCann, who is close to the IRA. Enter, at the beginning of 1971, Howard Marks, who's doing some dope business with Alan Marcuson and Charles Radcliffe of *Frendz* magazine’.

Was Stark more interested in the hash-dealings of *Frendz* people than their anarchist politics? Or both? Abrams offered no evidence for Stark’s apparent takeover of the funding of *Frendz*. But it is likely that Alan Marcuson, who was at that time in the same criminal milieu as Howard Marks and Jim McCann, *was* funding the magazine. In late-1972 Howard Marks was approached by old Oxford University chum Hamilton McMillan of MI6 to report on McCann’s activities in Holland. McMillan knew from reports sent by the Dutch secret service in 1971 that Marks and McCann were jointly engaged in hash-smuggling; and that McCann was supplying weapons to the

Provisional IRA.* According to Marks, MI6 wanted to finance an expansion of his Oxford boutique business, AnnaBelinda, and open branches in Dublin and Amsterdam as MI6 fronts to act as cover for agents spying on Irish republicans. Marks hesitantly agreed to co-operate with MI6, but played a game of double-agent by informing McCann of MI6 interest. In September 1973, MI6 presumably discovered or sensed Marks' duplicity because Hamilton McMillan was ordered to tell Marks that his services were no longer required and that he should keep his mouth shut about their meetings.*

Whatever interests David Solomon and James McCann had in common, it is unlikely that they included guerrilla warfare and LSD; for there is no evidence of Solomon ever involving himself in armed struggle politics after his service for the US army in World War Two; and there is no evidence of any involvement by McCann in LSD. What they did have a common interest in was smuggling cannabis; and there is also the possibility that Solomon got McCann interested in his plans to produce tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and its derivatives. Could the property of Bentley's correspondent's father have been intended to house a THC laboratory? By this time (June 1972) Solomon had completely fallen out of favour with Ronald Stark, who had broken off relations. Or had he? During this period Solomon and Stark were both seeking out as much ergotamine tartrate as they could find for future LSD production runs. In London in the summer of 1972, Stark, using the name, 'Matthew Thompson' of the 'Amalgamated Pharmaceutical Company' had the same accommodation address at a Holborn agency as Solomon.†

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* Pritchard and Laxton, Busted, ps.68-69.

* In 1979, McCann was caught dope-smuggling in Dublin. Fortunately for him, an Irish police report from 1973, confirming Marks' recruitment to MI6, was leaked to the press. McCann was acquitted after claiming that, as an Irish patriot, he was trying to bring a drug-dealing British spy to book. But while on remand in Portlaoise gaol, McCann was beaten up by Provisional IRA prisoners. Although the IRA had received shipments of arms via McCann, their public position was that they had no idea of his other activities, and thoroughly disapproved of them. See, Joe MacAnthony, 'Provos used drug runner to import arms', Independent, 26 August 2001.

† Tendler and May, p.97; Lee and Pratt, p.140.

Despite the success of Operation Julie in smashing the British acid underground, Richard Lee and many of his officers felt that the 'establishment' had deliberately frustrated any proper investigation of the Microdot gang's international connections – some of which Lee suspected may have involved terrorists and/or foreign intelligence agencies.* That the security services regarded the extent of LSD usage as an issue of 'national security' was further confirmed for Lee when he began to follow his squad's leads on Ronald Stark, and discovered that the security services had been on the trail before. When Lee went to see MI5 about a loan of some high-tech surveillance equipment, he was met by an official whose opening greeting was, 'Mr Lee, this meeting has not taken place'. To convince the official that the Julie investigation, 'affected national security', Lee gave the official a half-hour briefing on 'the suspected international level of the LSD trafficking and more particularly the probable involvement of terrorist groups like the Baader-Meinhof and the Angry Brigade'.*

Lee was fantasizing, if not actually lying, about the 'national security' implications in order to obtain surveillance equipment and warrants for bugging, burglaries and telephone taps. Nonetheless he surmised – correctly – that the network he was investigating had, 'a cell-like structure similar to that used by terrorist groups'. Lee says he never learned what action, if any, the security services took as result of his 'information' and he got nothing from them in return regarding any drug-smuggling activities which MI5 and MI6 might have been monitoring. In reality, the only drug dealers of any significance during this period who had any 'terrorist connections' were Howard Marks, a one-time asset of MI6 doing business with the Irish Republican, James McCann; and, as we shall see, Ron Stark, to whom Lee was denied access despite his role as a catalyst for the British acid industry. Stephen Bentley describes Lee as 'devious'. Lee, he says, 'would play both parties or all of the parties if it suited his ends... an intelligent man, yet sometimes he came out with ridiculous ideas. Dick Lee loved a good conspiracy theory'.†

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* Lee and Pratt, p.100; Bentley, ps.238-239.

* Lee and Pratt, pp.118-9.

† Bentley, ps.238-239.

FBI reports passed on from the DEA in California to the British police, 'only showed what Stark was not, not what he actually was'. Lee believed that after the Brotherhood of Eternal Love had been broken up in 1972, a new organisation had filled the void very quickly:

> 'The organisation had significant links with people… involved with the Brotherhood… At the time of the Brotherhood break-up, most of the principal offenders had jumped bail, and some of the fugitives – including [Michael] Randall [who had jumped bail and was on the run] and Stark – had undoubtedly played a part in creating the new organisation'.*

There was a lot of bad feeling among the Julie squad's members over the lack of recognition for their work. Holding the main trial in Bristol rather than at the Old Bailey in London ensured it was denied the world media attention the officers thought it deserved. Echoing Lee's resentment at being blocked from on high from investigating Stark and other overseas trails, Stephen Bentley writes,

> 'Clearly Stark was worthy of investigation by the Operation Julie team. He was never interviewed by us. Dick Lee sought permission to go to the Rome prison where Stark was serving his sentence to interview him. He got short shrift – that was beyond the remit of Operation Julie! Another piece of unfinished business was the Israeli Izchak Sheni. He was known as Zani to us on the Operation Julie team as that was how he was known to Mark Tcharney and Solomon. Zani was a dealer in heroin and LSD based in Amsterdam. He supplied drugs to Israel and other countries worldwide. One source of information was adamant that he supplied Mossad, the Israeli secret police. The informant noted that Mossad in turn supplied the CIA with some of this LSD. Solomon used Tcharney as a courier to deliver the Kemp acid to Zani in Amsterdam. The remit for Operation Julie was to bring the manufacturers and distribution network to justice. Zani

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* Lee and Pratt, p.136.

> was key player in that distribution network. At one stage in the investigation Lee was as excited about this dealer as any other, if not more so. For some reason that excitement waned and Zani seemed to be a forgotten link. My own thoughts on that? Lee was warned off by the security services either in Britain or overseas'.*

Sheni/Zani disappeared at the time of Operation Julie's climax; he and the possible Mossad connection remain a complete mystery. We do however know what became of Ronald Hadley Stark.

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* Bentley,pp.216-7.

12 – The Many Faces of Ronald Hadley Stark

Busted in Bologna

In February 1975, in Bologna, Ronald Stark landed in big trouble. It began when Carabiniere retrieved three stolen luxury cars from a garage. Enquires at the garage led the Carabiniere to a room in the Grand Hotel Baglioni, where they arrested an Italian man named Franco Buda and a couple who possessed British passports in the names of Terence William Abbot and Pauline Margaret Booth. A search of the room yielded a number of forged documents, a large sum of money in foreign currencies, several kilos of cannabis and a sizeable quantity of morphine and cocaine. The Carabiniere also found a key for a safe deposit box secured on Terence William Abbot's behalf by one Adolfo Roberto Fiorenzi, who was soon located and arrested as another suspect.*

The Carabiniere discovered that Fiorenzi had previously come under suspicion of involvement in the bombing of a Rome to Munich express train on August 4, 1974, in which 12 people were killed and 48 injured, 45 minutes after it had left Florence.† Former-prime minister Aldo Moro had boarded the train in Rome, but been called away on political business shortly before it left.* Fiorenzi had been

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* For the information in the following sections of this chapter, I have relied on a number of sources. As well as the authors cited and quoted, I have used the *Moro Commission Report to the Italian Parliament*, 1984 (translation in the appendices of D Black, Acid: a New Secret History of LSD); *Raggruppamento Operativo Special Carabinieri Reparto (Report of the Carabiniere Special Operations Group): Eversione Nr.509/62 di prot.* "P". Roma, 23 Luglio 1996. https://www.senato.it/service/PDF/PDFServer/BGT/908257.pdf

† Willan, *Puppet Masters*, ps.312-314.

* Giovanni Fasanella; Grippo Antonella (2006). Silenzi degli Innocenti. BUR; Maria Fida Moro, (2004). La Nebulosa del Caso Moro. Milan: Selene.

staying at the Hotel Locarno in Rome at a time when other suspects of the bomb plot were meeting there.

Franco Buda, a professional car thief, decided to flip and sent a note to the prosecutor concerning a notorious Palestinian terrorist attack on Rome's Fiumicino airport in 1973, in which a Pan Am 707 had been destroyed by three incendiary bombs, leaving 32 passengers dead. The terrorists were allowed passage on a Lufthansa jet to Kuwait, where they released their hostages in exchange for their own liberty. Buda testified he had been told by Terence Abbott that Fiorenzi had safe-housed one of the organisers of the massacre; and that he done so at the request of an officer of the security forces; but as Fiorenzi denied everything, the investigation stalled.*

The British passport of Terence W. Abbott bore stamps in the visa section from Lebanon, Holland and Sweden. He also had an American passport in the same name, issued by the US Embassy in London in the late-1960s, and an international driver's licence issued in Paris. More searches were carried out in Tuscany, at a country house in Tavarnelle, where Abbott had previously stayed. After following up their findings by telexing police in London and Washington through Interpol, the Italian investigators discovered that 'Terrence Abbott' was in fact the international acid-dealing fugitive, Ronald Stark, who had escaped the net of the US Federal Task Force when the Brotherhood of Eternal Love was rolled up in 1973.

Stark's safe deposit box in Rome was found to contain documents from his LSD laboratories in France and Belgium, including correspondence with members of the Brotherhood of Eternal Love in America. There were also bottles of chemical substances: one was identified as synthetic psilocybin; others were thought to be ingredients for making other drugs, such as THC or LSD, but the contents were never identified. An American passport in the name of Henrietta Ann Kaimer had a photo ID matching the photo in the British passport of Pauline Margaret Booth. Henrietta was Stark's partner. She was later convicted and sentenced to prison, but was released after some months to take custody of her infant daughter.

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* Willan, ps. 312-313.

In England, Detective Inspector Richard Lee, who launched the Operation Julie investigation on 17 February 1976, realised that the Ronald Stark imprisoned in Italy for drugs-smuggling was the same Ronald Stark who had been involved in LSD production with members of the British 'microdot gang'. Lee wanted to go to Italy and interview Stark in prison but his request was turned down. Lee did not get to see the documents seized by the Italian police until his investigation was being wound up in 1977. * When he finally saw them Lee thought they suggested continued links between Stark and Kemp. They included:

*Formulas for several compounds, including synthetic cocaine, LSD and THC; the formula for the acid was identical to Richard Kemp's.

*A financial report on money advanced to the British businessmen Michael Druce and Ronald Craze in 1968 to buy ergotamine tartrate.

*Letters to Stark at his Le Clocheton laboratory in Belgium. One letter, beginning, 'Dear Ron', was from Charles Adams, an 'economic counsellor' at the American embassy in London; plus draft letters from Stark to Wendy Hansen, American vice-consul in Florence.

*Handwritten letters ('believed to be by Stark') in the name of 'Matthew Thompson' of the Amalgamated Pharmaceutical Company, 73 Holland Rd W14, some 500 yards from where Richard Kemp was resident in 1972.

In Stark's diary the Carabiniere found names and telephone numbers of his contacts. Among these were a number of rock bands: Deep Purple, the Family, the Grateful Dead and the Faces. Also listed was the radical British psychiatrist, David Cooper (a colleague of RD Laing at the Tavistock Institute, who studied LSD as a treatment therapy, and famously said, 'Don't give LSD to Che Guevara; he might stop fighting'). The most surprising entry was Lord Donald Stokes, managing director of the British Leyland Motor Corporation Ltd.

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* Lee and Pratt, p.334.

There is nothing to suggest that any of these people were wittingly doing illegal business with Stark. Nick Sand however, who was also on this list, of course had been.*

Some of the documents discovered by the Italians revealed that Stark's contacts in that country included prominent figures of the Far Right, the security services and organised crime: Salvo Lima, a Member of Parliament and pillar of Mafia power in Palermo; Prince Gianfranco di Montereale, a suspect in an alleged coup plot in 1970; General Vito Miceli, the former head of the SID security service; and Graziano Verzotto, former president of the Italian state mining corporation (Ente Minerario), who fled to Lebanon to escape a corruption charges.†

Italy's 'Years of Lead'

Italy's decade-long trauma had begun on December 12, 1969 with an explosion at the National Agricultural Bank on Milan's Piazza Fontana which killed seventeen people and injured eighty-eight. The atrocity took place following Italy's 'Hot Autumn' of strikes and occupations by workers and students in 1969. In response to the revolt, elements of the Italian secret services and their assets in the fascist movement deployed a 'Strategy of Tension'; the purpose of which was to 'conquer' the population by means of psychological warfare waged with disinformation, violent provocation and political intoxication. According to the Italian Leftist, Toni Negri,

> 'The Piazza Fontana Bombing at the end of 1969 ushered in a new period... When the police said that it was an anarchist attack, nobody believed them. Today the courts themselves believe that the CIA was involved, even the Italian secret services; and that the state – diverted from its true purpose, yes, but nonetheless the state – was behind all this. In Italy, if you look at the reports of the parliamentary commissions charged with investigating the Piazza Fontana bombing, or the bombing in the Piazza

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* I am grateful to Philip Willan for kindly supplying me with a copy of pages from Stark's address book.

† Willan, p.312.

> della Loggia in Brescia, the Italicus train bombing, you always arrive at the same conclusions. Why then, did the government embark on this course of action? To create terror. And why create terror? Italy was governed by the Christian Democrats, a country on the edge of Western Europe with a Communist Party and other left-wing parties that together accounted for about 35 per cent of the vote – a completely uncontrollable social dynamic.*

From 1969 to 1975, there were 4,334 officially-registered acts of terrorist violence, 83 per cent of which were attributed to the extreme right.† By 1975, the secret services, having intoxicated the political atmosphere and polarised the forces of Left and Right, were concentrating their efforts on manipulating those on the Left who wanted to meet force with force. They succeeded. Negri, asked in 1998 about the response of the extra-parliamentary Left to such attacks, recalled:

> 'The response that was given was not at first a terrorist response, but an extremist response. It was necessary to respond at the same level that had been imposed by the police actions of the state. The first military actions [by the Red Brigades] began three or four years after the Milan bombing, in 1973 or 1974... there were huge marches during which, more and more frequently, armed extremist groupings began to appear... By this time, Italy was virtually in a state of civil war. None of the actors was any longer in control and this was a tragedy that was to end in defeat. For everybody'.‡

The Red Brigades

While awaiting trial in Don Bosco Prison in Pisa, Stark worked as an assistant to the prison barber and put his multi-lingual talents to good

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* *Negri on Negri: in conversation with Anne Dufourmentelle,* ps.3-4.

† Quoted in Jeffrey Bale, 'Right-wing terrorists and the Extra parliamentary Left in Post-World War 2 Europe: Collusion or Manipulation?, *Lobster* No. 18.

‡ Antonio Negri, 'Between Historic Compromise and Terrorism: Reviewing the experience of Italy in the 1970s'. *Le Monde Diplomatique*, August-September 1998.

use by translating legal documents for fellow prisoners. Stark was now holding court with imprisoned members of the Red Brigades. He showed a very thorough knowledge of Middle East politics and claimed that he was well-connected with armed Palestinian factions in the Lebanon – particularly the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).

To his fellow prisoners Stark was obviously a man of many talents, some of which were of use to them. What was less obvious was that Stark was informing on them. In spring 1976 he made contact with the chief prosecutor of Pisa and passed on details of conversations between himself Red Brigades leader, Renato Curcio.

Stark's informer status did not figure in his trial for drugs-smuggling in July 1976. In fact, Stark seemed to be digging the hole deeper for himself when he proclaimed himself to be a political prisoner and refused to recognise the court. He was sentenced to fourteen years imprisonment for drug-smuggling and fined $60,000.

Originally, the Red Brigades' organisation had been divided into 'industrial fronts' for agitation in factories and regional 'columns' formed for street fighting against fascist gangs and the Carabiniere. These bodies were co-ordinated by a 'strategic directorate' headed by Renate Curcio. But most members of the strategic directorate had been locked up in 1974 during a wave of arrests. Stark told the Bologna prosecutor that the Brigades' networks, consisting of an 'operational group' of about 300 hard-core members, were now presided over by a highly secretive 'Military and Industrial Information Centre'. In July 1977, Stark complained to a Bologna prosecutor that information he had passed on had not led to arrests. Because of this failure, as he saw it, on the part of the Italian authorities, Stark stated that he had taken steps to provide '*certain people'* with information that would be enough to round up the Red Brigades leadership. He added that these certain people would not be embarrassed about making the information available because 'it did not concern their own country,' thus implying that he was referring to an *American* intelligence agency.

Stark also claimed to have warned the authorities that the Red Brigades were planning to kidnap a senior parliamentarian in Rome. On 16 March 1978, Aldo Moro, former Italian Prime Minister, was kidnapped. His five bodyguards were killed in broad daylight on the

Via Fani in the centre of Rome, by a well organised Red Brigades unit, including four gunmen disguised in *Alitalia* uniforms. Moro was held in a hideout in the centre of Rome for seven weeks before he was shot dead with eleven bullets and dumped in the boot of car which the killers parked in a street located exactly half-way between the party headquarters of the Christian Democrats and Communists.

In a 1992 BBC *Timewatch* documentary, Umberto D'Amato, former head of the secret service of the Italian Interior Ministry said: 'The Red Brigades were infiltrated with some difficulty because they were a closed organization, a very efficient one. But there were some very important and successful infiltrators'.* But despite the efforts by D'Amato and his CIA-backed fascist colleagues, they did not succeed in making 'puppets' of the Red Brigades as a whole; though some on the more respectable Left would like to think that they did. Asked years later about the evidence of state support and involvement, the reaction of leading Red Brigades members was to explain it all away using Maoist dogma.

According to the thought of Mao Zedong, 'primary contradictions' within society could be interchangeable with 'secondary contradictions'. In the Red Brigades application of this to the Moro kidnap, they saw two forces of the ruling class in conflict with each other. One, led by Moro, favoured an 'historic compromise' between the Christian Democrats and the Communists. To the Red Brigades, the historic-compromisers were 'enemy number one', secondary to the CIA-backed Right-Wing, including the fascists, who just happened to share the Brigades' immediate aim of destroying Moro's initiative. Prospero Gallinari, a Red Brigades participant in the Moro operation, said from his courtroom cage years later, 'If when you fight a battle there are some who have the same aims as you but fight for different reasons, then so be it. It's all part of the rules of contradiction. There may have been others involved who had different aims from my own'.*

Stark's claim about a mysterious 'Military and Industrial Information Centre' running the Red Brigades was the stuff of grand

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* 'Operation Gladio', BBC *Timewatch* documentary, 1992.
* Channel Four TV, Dispatches, December 1994.

conspiracy theory. It led to suggestions that the original ‘naive’, Mao-befuddled Red Brigades leadership had been ‘replaced’ by CIA and Italian secret state assets. The conspiracy theorising also established a false trail leading to the arrest of 'other' suspects, such as Antonio Negri – who was also, quite falsely, accused of being a terrorist and a CIA asset – along with members of his ‘Workers Autonomy’ tendency.

The conspiracy theories also impressed leading members of the Italian political class. Senator Vittorio Cervone, a close friend of Moro, may have had Stark in mind when he suggested that the Moro Commission (later set up to investigate the Moro kidnap and murder) should assess, ‘whether it is true that the Red Brigades, when they wanted to use a secret code, adopted an old military cipher that could be known only to members of the secret services?’ He wanted to know if members of the secret services had learnt the location of the Red Brigades safe-house on the Via Camillo Montalcini where Moro was being held, and then decided to protect the kidnappers rather than free Moro. Whether the secret services had acted in this way or not, the reluctance of a corruption-addled Italian state to save Moro’s life by compromising with the terrorists certainly helped to ensure the burial of Moro's Historic Compromise along with Moro himself.

In the decades that have passed since the Moro Assassination, no hard evidence has emerged to suggest that any of leaders of the Red Brigades at any stage constituted a third level of organisation, i.e. a ‘Military and Industrial Information Centre’ above the known leadership of Moretti, Senzani, Curcio et al in the Strategic Directorate. Furthermore, there has been no new evidence to suggest that any leading Red Brigades members were CIA assets. The Red Brigades members who organised the kidnap and subsequent murder of Aldo Moro all served long prison sentences, and have never admitted to being anything other than what they claimed to be at the time.

On 19 April 1978, when Aldo Moro was still being held at a Red Brigades safe house in Rome, the Carabiniere, acting on intelligence, raided a pizzeria in Lucca, Tuscany and arrested five young men belonging to a small anarchist group called Armed Revolutionary Action (ARA). Founded by Professor Gianfranco Faina of the University of Genoa, ARA was characterised by the

international composition of its membership. In its ranks it had Chilean and German members as well as Italian, and stood for spreading international guerrilla war. Enrico Paghera, one of those arrested, had recently been released from prison. He was found in possession of documents given to him in prison by Ronald Stark. These included a map locating a paramilitary camp near Baalbek, Lebanon, plus instructions on how to get to get there, and passwords for meeting Stark's contacts in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). However, according to Tim Scully, who has accessed documents from Italian case files on Stark, the map and documents weren't for getting to PFLP camps; rather they were for getting to the Baalbek headquarters of a Lebanese clan who had been supplying Stark with hash, and who had an armed militia to protect their business (more on that later).

In 1978, Stark, facing new charges of membership of an armed band, said that he had simply let Paghera know of a refuge, in case he needed one. But Paghera, when interrogated, told the carabiniere that Stark, as well as providing him with instructions on how to get to Baalbek, had told him how to make contact with a Libyan intelligence agent who was to arrange travel by ARA members to Lebanon. Paghera told the police he had met Stark's 'Libyan' contact, a man calling himself 'M Saudi', at a college in Rome.

On 18 April 1978, a purported communiqué from the Red Brigades claimed that Moro had already been 'executed' and his body dumped in Lake Duchessa in the Abruzzi mountains. Paghera, who had been returned to prison, told Red Brigades member (and future *pentiti*), Patrizio Peci, that the communiqué had been sent by Armed Revolutionary Action, the day *before* Paghera and friends were arrested in Lucca. Paghera claimed that the reason for faking the communiqué had been to relieve police pressure in Rome so as to make it easier for ARA members wanted by the police to leave the city. In fact, the real author of the forged Red Brigades communiqué was not ARA but Tony Chichiarelli, a professional criminal who often did forgery jobs for the Calabrian Mafia, and had links with the SISDE secret service. When the forgery was issued on 18 April 1978, the caribiniere's focus in the hunt for Moro switched from Rome to Lake Duchessa.

Ten years later, in 1988, Paghera told a different story. Interviewed by *Panorama* magazine, he said that prior to his arrest in Lucca he had been 'recruited' in prison by Stark, not as a revolutionary, but as an informer for the Italian secret services. Stark had supplied Paghera with details on how to contact the intelligence service SISDE through the Office of Special Affairs 'D Section' at the Italian Interior Ministry: D'Amato's 'puppetry' department. Paghera also said that he had been asked by a Carabiniere captain to claim authorship of the false communiqué. A year later the same carabiniere captain asked Paghera to claim responsibility on behalf of ARA for the murder of journalist Mino Pecorelli, but Paghera refused to do this.* Pecorelli, shot to death on 20 March 1979, was a fearless investigator of corruption in the Christian Democrat Party. He had also strongly hinted that Lake Duchessa communiqué was a forgery, designed to undermine attempts to rescue Aldo Moro.†

Lebanon

Italian police, who in 1975 accessed Stark's safe-deposit box, found correspondence in which he purported to be the business representative of Iman Moussa Al-Sadr. Summarising a report in *Panorama*, *Acid Dreams*, says:

> 'Stark's antics took him far afield. Occasionally he travelled to the Baalbek region of Lebanon, where he negotiated with a Shiite Muslim sect for shiploads of hashish. Stark claimed to be a business representative of Iman Moussa Sadr, a powerful Shiite warlord who controlled vast hashish plantations and a private army of 6,000 men. The area under his dominion was said to include training camps used by the Palestinian Liberation Organization and other terrorist groups'.*

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* Willan, ps.254-259, p.309; *Repubblica*, 1 May 1997.

† *Times*, 6 Nov. 1995.

* Lee and Shlain, *Acid Dreams*, p.279; A Maurizio de Luca and Pino Buongiorno, 'Giallo Amerikano', *Panorama,* 31 Oct 1978. See also (in Italian) Marco Pizzuti, 'Libri: Storie di Intrighi, Stragi, Traffici ed Estremismi', *News giugno*, 2009

Stark was active in the Lebanon during the period of its transition from a narco state to a failed state. A confidential report by the UN, in 1972, described the North Bekaa hemp field of 2,500 square kilometres as an 'island of isolation' which served as 'a refuge area for outlaws': 'The political leaders protected growers from prosecution or destruction of crops in return for a hefty one-third of the harvest'.* As always, Stark's stated claims about 'connections' can never be taken at face value. If his claim about being a 'business representative' of Iman Moussa Sadr is to be taken seriously, then the first question is: who was Moussa Sadr?

Moussa Al-Sadr, an Iranian born cleric with Lebanese ancestry, was no hash-trading 'warlord'. By 1975, Moussa Al-Sadr had become the leading advocate for the rights of the Shia citizens of Lebanon. The organisation he led, the Movement of the Disinherited, formed a military wing named the Amal Militia (Battalions of the Lebanese Resistance). Politically, Al-Sadr's Islamist movement can be seen as a precursor to the present-day Hezbollah.† In June 1976, President Hafez Al-Assad of Syria sent his army into Lebanon to save the Maronite regime from being overthrown by Palestinian guerrilla factions and their Leftist allies. Assad found a crucial ally in Moussa Al-Sadr, who became the architect of the alliance between the Iranian Shia and the ruling Alawites of Syria.

Sadr later suggested that Assad meet Sayyid Ruhollah Mūsavi Khomeini, then exiled in Iraq. Assad saw strategic benefit in supporting a future ally in the region, and supported Khomeini with intelligence, money, and assistance'.* Syria, the first Arab state to recognise the post-Shah government in Iran, supported it in the Iran-Iraq War. The alliance continues to this day in the Syrian civil war. On 25 August 1978, Moussa Al-Sadr

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www.altrainformazione.it/wp/2009/06/26/libri-storie-di-intrighi-stragi-traffici-ed-estremismi/

* Jonathan Marshall, *The Lebanese Connection: Corruption, Civil War and the International Drug Traffic*, p.27, p.164.

† Rula Jurdi Abisaad, 'Musa al-Sadr, the Lebanese State and the Left', *Journal of Shia Islamic Studies, Vol.VII, no.2*, Spring2015,

* Bassam Barabandi and Tyler Jess Thompson, 'A Friend of my Father: Iran's Manipulation of Bashar al-Assad'. *The Atlantic Council*, August 28, 2014

and two companions, Sheikh Muhammad Yaacoub and journalist Abbas Badreddine, travelled to Libya for talks at the invitation of Muammar Gaddafi. The three were last seen on 31 August, and were never heard from again. There are various theories: the Shia leaders of Iran's impending Revolution got rid of Al-Sadr because he was too radical; the Libyans killed him because he had denounced Gaddafi's secularised version of Islam as a heresy; Palestinian factions, especially those supported by Iraq, would have seen his alliance with Syria as an attempt to hijack their cause; the CIA were desperate to keep the Shah in power in Iran. The consensus amongst Middle East scholars – friend and foe alike – is that had Moussa Al-Sadr survived to hail the Iranian Revolution in 1979, he would have become a major figure in Middle East politics.*

Did Stark just have a talent for 'connecting' with history-making individuals or just a talent for making up or exaggerating such connections? No doubt the CIA would be very interested in someone like Al-Sadr, and that if Stark was a CIA asset, his relationship with Al-Sadr would have been operational. But it is also the case that the CIA had little understanding of the oppositional forces in Iran. When the Shah was overthrown in 1978 the US State Department and the CIA were completely taken by surprise.

The next question has to be: what was Stark doing in Lebanon? The Brotherhood of Eternal Love was said by the US Drug Enforcement Administration to have imported almost two tonnes of Lebanese hash to the US in the early 70s. In August 1970, a plane was tracked across from Maine to Greenland, Iceland, Holland, Italy, Cyprus and eventually, Lebanon by US narcotics agents of the DEA who were acting on intelligence concerning Brotherhood of Eternal Love associates in California. The plane landed at an airfield near Baalbek and was loaded up with 1500 pounds of hash. The operation was interrupted by local customs police, but they were forced to stand down by a large group of local armed men. The plane took off again, but it was again tracked and forced to land in Crete where it was

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* SH Nasr, *Expectation of the Millennium: Shi'ism in History*. SUNY Press, 1989 p.425.

impounded by Greek police. Five American men were arrested: the plane's pilot, John Robert Moore (51); co-pilot Philip Irwin Amos (31); David Leigh Mantell (31); Kenneth Howard Connell (31) and Robert Franklin Black (28).* David Leigh Mantell was, as we have seen, , Nick Sand's former lab partner.

Days later, interior minister Kamal Jumblatt implicated the parliamentary deputy for Baalbek, Niaf el-Masri in the smuggling operation. According to *The Secret War Against Dope*, by Andrew Tully, the plane full of hash had taken off from a freshly-constructed airstrip on Niaf's estate in the Bekaa. Niaf's son, Shaw Kat el-Masri, had met the smugglers at a Beirut hotel. Members of the Masri family were hard to prosecute because of their standing amongst the Lebanese Shias. Niaf's father, Mulhim Qasim Al Masri, was something of a local legend, having been a freedom fighter, first against the Ottoman occupiers of Lebanon, then against the French colonial forces. Mulhim Qasim Al Masri was a native of Brital. According to its Wikipedia page,

> 'Due to the town's mountainous landscape, multiple revolutions against any occupation were born in Brital. The revolution against the French mandate was led by a prominent Britali and his local men (Melhem Kassem al-Masri), also Brital is the birthplace of the Amal movement and Hezbollah'.

A member of the US House Foreign affairs Committee complained that 'Despite the notoriety given to this seizure, Masri is still untouched and still serves as an active member of the chamber of deputies'.

David Mantell had lived with Nick Sand at the Cloverdale ranch until Sand allowed Ron Stark to try and conceal the ownership of the ranch through one his front companies. After leaving Cloverdale, Mantell got into smuggling hash. Mantell had a low opinion of Stark, but after his imprisonment in Greece, some of his

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* Marshall, pp. 25-26; Andrew Tully, *The Secret War Against Dope*, (pp.213-220; 'Getting High with Jennifer' (interview with Jennifer Dorhn), *Good Times*, 8 January 1971 (reproduced in *Hashish Smuggling and Passport Fraud: The Brotherhood of Eternal Love*. United States. Congress. Senate. Committee on the Judiciary, 1973); Hooligan X, BBC documentary by Martin Patience & Alex Rowell. 2019.

friends at the Cloverdale ranch agreed to go to work for Stark, on the understanding that he would use his connections to get Mantell released. His high-powered lawyer, Sam Goekjian, knew who to bribe in Greece and managed to get Mantell out of prison by the fall of 1971. As a 'pay-off', Mantell introduced Ron Stark to the El-Masri family in Lebanon as his hashish connection. As a result, according to Tim Scully,

> 'Ron's primary contact in Lebanon was the El-Masri family and he spent a fair amount of time visiting with them between 1972 and 1975. He was very interested in the more powerful THC derivatives such as the dimethyl heptyl and he and his chemist (Tord Svenson) had decided by 1972 that the best raw material for making those derivatives was hash oil. I'm convinced that Ron's connection with the El-Masri family was motivated by his interest in making powerful THC derivatives and failing that in smuggling hash and/or hash oil for fun and profit and that any political connections were relatively incidental. Of course the Italians saw it differently since they were seeing political conspiracies under every rock they turned over'.*

Prison Wager

In October 1978, Ronald Stark, having served over three years in prison, went to the Italian Court of Appeal and told the Judges, in Arabic, that he was really 'Khouri Ali' of a Palestinian special commando organisation called 'Group 14'. Then six months later Stark hurled another bombshell in court. On 11 April 1979, following an appeal Stark lodged in Bologna, Judge Giorgio Floridia announced that, 'an impressive series of scrupulously enumerated proofs' provided by Stark's defence suggested that from 1960 onwards Stark 'belonged to the American secret services' and 'had entered the Middle East drug world in order to infiltrate armed organisations operating in that area and to gain contacts and information about European terrorist groups'. The judge noted that Stark couldn't

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* Correspondence. Tim Scully to D Black, September, 2019.

actually say he was in the CIA because to do so on foreign soil, would be a treasonable offense in the US. Stark, it was noted, had received regular payments (unspecified) from Fort Lee, Virginia, was 'known to be the site of a CIA office' at the Fort Lee army base. Floridia released Stark on bail, with the stipulation that he had to report to the Carabiniere twice a week. The next day Stark took up residence at the Ambassador hotel, but was taken ill and hospitalized at a cardiac surgery for 'acute myocardial infarction', a symptom of his old complaint, Reiters Syndrome.

An article in the Bologna newspaper *Il Resto del Carlino* of March 23 1979 says that Stark, using his Ali Khoury false identity, 'would have' frequented the circles of the Milanese far left between 1968 and 1971. The employment of the qualifier 'would have' (*avrebbe*) is notable: Stark might have played the role of a Palestinian guerrilla if he really had been a long-term CIA penetration agent. But that would be a big 'if'. A later judicial investigation (1996) into CIA connections with Far-Right terrorism in the 1970s took note of this article and stated, 'Investigations are underway to establish the truthfulness of the article given the extreme importance of frequentations dating back to those years in relation to the activities of Stark in the US'. Confirmation however, was not forthcoming; and the use of 'would have' (*avrebbe*), suggests that the *Il Resto del Carlino* report was mere speculation.* It is true that Stark hung out with 'New Left' revolutionaries in London, Paris, and Milan.† But there is no hard evidence that he presented himself in Leftist circles as Ali Khouri, stateless Palestinian freedom fighter.

On 24 April 1979, Stark discharged himself from the clinic where he was being treated and let the court supervisors know that if they wanted to contact him they could do so through the local US consulate. On 17 May the Court of Bologna revoked the ordinance for release after the Carabiniere reported that Stark had made himself

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* Carabinieri Special Operation Group Terrorism Department July 23, 1996. Subject: Criminal proceedings against Rognoni Giancarlo and others. Part 6. Ronald Hadley Stark,pp. 31-32. http://www.ritaatria.it/Portals/0/Documenti/PiazzaFontana/Atti_2.pdf

† Lee and Shlain, p.279, p.317.

absent from court supervision. Then a telex arrived at Bologna Carabiniere HQ with a warning:

> 'A reliable confidential source has reported that Stark, according to what he had himself disclosed, was in a position to leave the country secretly with the assistance of American personnel. The localities indicated for his probable departure are Pisa or Vicenza.'

As noted by the Italian media, both cities hosted US Air Force bases. Next, a letter arrived at the US Consul in Florence from Stark returning some money he had borrowed. Stark however, had already flown.

Judge Floridia's acceptance of Stark claim that he had always worked for US intelligence elevated the Stark story to a new level of conspiracy theorising, drawing in parliamentarians as well as journalists. Investigators for the Italian Parliamentary commission on the Moro Assassination later noted, 'it may be presumed that he wanted to create a direct link, not existing at that time, between Italian terrorism and Palestinian guerrillas, following a request which he himself said he had received from [Red Brigades leaders] Curcio and Bertolazzi, with whom he had collaborated in prison on brigatisti documents and even on a cryptographic system of communication'. The Moro Commission suspected that Stark and SISMI (Italian military intelligence) were working together to establish 'false trails' of Libyan involvement in Italian terrorism.*

Apart from conjecture about Stark's alleged CIA connections, and his own unreliable statements, we are left with the judgment of Judge Floridia. But it is uncorroborated. Floridia's judgment was based on 'proofs' consisting of documents provided by Stark, But, as we have seen, Stark was greatly experienced in fooling authorities with dodgy documentation. Certainly Stark operated as a gaol-yard snitch for the Italian police and security services; and given this fact one could surmise that *if* he had deemed it necessary to spy for the CIA to get out of prison he would have done so. According to the Moro Commision Report of early 1984:

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* *Moro Commission Report to the Italian Parliament 1984 (*translation in the appendices of D Black, Acid: a New Secret History of LSD).

> ‘The US authorities have never admitted that Stark was an American agent, and moreover affirmed that they were seeking his arrest. However, no request for his extradition was ever made, while his cordial relations with other American officials are documented, both during his imprisonment and the period before his arrest. Recently Stark has been arrested again in Holland for drug trafficking and illegal use of a radio transmitter’.*

Tim Scully, who is in possession of documents from Italian case files, believes that Stark’s role as an informer and CIA asset was, like so much else in his life, a pretence, and that he never actually gave the authorities useful information.

A few weeks after Stark jumped bail and absconded from Italian justice, an internal report on the case was sent to Judge Floridia from Assistant Prosecutor Claudio Nunziata, dated June 4 1979.† Nunziata expressed a 'contrary opinion' to Floridia's acceptance of the application had Stark submitted which got him out on bail. Nunziata found that between from the time he was incarcerated in February 1975 and the appeal ruling of Autumn 1977 which reduced the sentence to 5 years, he had 'made every effort to become an infiltrator' of the Red Brigades, providing information to the Prison authorities, the Public Prosecutors, and Counter Terrorist officers of the Carabinieri. However, 'all of them, more or less, gave scarce importance to his information'. Stark had informed the Pisa Public Prosecutor's Office that he heard prisoners discuss a plan to assassinate Judge Francesco Coco in Genoa, who was at the time preparing the prosecution of Renate Curcio and 52 alleged Red Brigades members. In June 1976, Coco was shot dead along with two bodyguards in the first deliberately planned killing attributed to the Red Brigades (previously they had only opened fire to escape from bungled operations). Nunziata however, revealed that there was no evidence that Stark had disclosed anything about Coco’s murder *before* it had been carried out. All other information provided by Stark

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* Ibid.

† *Report to the Senate of the Republic of Italy Chamber of Deputies*. Dr. Claudio Nunziata, Assistant Public Prosecutor.To the Investigating Judge Dr. Floridia]

on the Red Brigades 'was defined as imaginative or already known and of public domain, or has never been verified'. Carabiniere Captain Pignero made it clear to Stark that in order to establish his effective capability as an infiltrator he would need to provide information regarding the location of Red Brigades suspects at large, such as safe-houses. But Stark did not provide any such information.

Nunziata noted that the reduction of his sentence to five years in his appeal of autumn 1977 raised for Stark the opportunity of compensation on the grounds that the original sentence had been wrongful. Following the reduction of sentence, Stark *stopped* supplying the Italian authorities with ‘intelligence’ gleaned from his fellow prisoners. Now Stark seemed to be to exclusively focussed on avoiding being handed over to the American authorities, i.e. he didn’t want to get out of frying pan only to get burned in the fire. It was at this point that Stark identified himself as 'Ali Khouri', stateless Palestinian activist with paramilitary connections in the Middle East. This extraordinary, incredulous development, appeared credible in the light of Stark’s involvement with Paghera and the Armed Revolutionary Action group. In June 1978, Bologna magistrate, Graziano Gori was assigned to investigate and clarify Stark's ties to the US drug-dealers, the Arab paramilitaries and Italian terrorists. Stark was charged with 'armed banditry', but he never stood trial on these charges, partly because weeks into the investigation Gori was killed in a car accident.

Although Stark was no longer plying the Italian authorities with intelligence he was nourishing his longstanding contacts with American diplomats. As pointed out above, in July 1977, Stark hinted that since the Italian authorities had 'failed' to act on information he had given them, he was now passing intelligence on the Red Brigades to a US agency who would be less 'embarrassed'; thus hinting that he was a CIA asset. Nunziata's report notes the 'very weird' friendly relations between Stark and a number of American diplomats, namely: Wendy Hansen, US vice-consul in Florence; Philip Taylor, US consul in Rome; and Charles Adams, who was described as an 'American diplomat'. In the case of Hansen, Stark was using her New York address for his mails to America, as it was a secure 'diplomatic channel'. Nunziata commented, it was 'not easy to understand also why the diplomats buzzed around Ron Stark', visiting him in Bologna

prison on many occasions. In a letter to Hansen, Stark even discussed the possibility of a Chilean-style military coup as a positive outcome in Italy, writing to her, 'The only important transition that is needed (the transition to a military regime) is still distant'. Nunziata comments:

> 'It seems evident that the American officials nursed Ron Stark in order to receive information regarding the internal situation of the Italian prisons and in particular, regarding circulation of the revolutionary topic among the politicized detained person. We can't really know if the acquisition of information was limited to that level or if it went much deeper. When Ron Stark upholds to have provided certain persons residing in foreign countries with information of extreme interest "that would allow to catch the real leader of the Red Brigades," he evidently made reference to the CIA, and [had]... declared to have worked in the past for the American espionage... he stated that he had the intention of transmitting it to the CIA'.

In a letter sent by Stark to a friend named 'Fong' on September 30, 1978, Stark expressed the hope that he would be allowed to stay in Italy if he promised to work as an informer for the Carabinieri's Special Unit, penetrating the Red Brigades. However, Fong's response to Stark's letter indicated that as his idea for becoming an informer was 'not very sincere' it might not be taken seriously. Fong's opinion was 'The best thing you can do is to disappear'.

Stark's bank account at the Manufacturers Hanover Trust Company had received recurrent deposits of money from one 'Mr. Schranzer' from Fort Lee, but Nunziati suspected that Stark arranged with 'Mr. Schranzer' to send money from Fort Lee because it was a US military base, 'known as being the C.I.A. headquarters'; for 'the purpose for proving his position as a secret agent':

> 'One fact is true: that this kind of relationship with Schranzer seemed to have developed on a road completely independent from the ones of Wendy Hansen and Taylor. Any mention to these other relationships of Stark with American citizens were never mentioned in any correspondence with Wendy Hansen...'

Summarizing Stark's get-out-jail-and-stay-free card, Tim Scully says:

> ‘Ron Stark knew that he was facing trial in the United States for the same charges that sent Nick Sand and me to McNeil Island and he spent a long time trying to figure out how to get out of Italian jail without being instantly extradited to the United States. He finally worked to fake a medical condition and at the same time told various judges that there was an American law making it a crime for a CIA agent to admit that he was one followed by a couple of winks and his statement that he was not a CIA agent. One credulous judge [Floridia] granted Ron Stark temporary release from prison. Ron was admitted to a hospital for a cardiac condition and he soon absconded for Amsterdam where he returned to hashish smuggling’.*

After fleeing Italy in 1979, Stark disappeared from view until he was arrested in Holland in 1982 for possession of 16 kilos of Lebanese hash plus some cocaine and heroin, and for illegal use of a radio transmitter. The Dutch authorities decided that rather than put the troublesome American on trial, it would be less trouble just to deport him, Stark was deported in 1983 to the US, where he was arrested on landing in New York to face the same Federal indictment from 1973 that sent Nick Sand and Tim Scully to McNeil Island. Stark was transported from New York to San Francisco by US marshals where he remained in jail for a few months during pre-trial proceedings. In the meantime, the DEA called on Tim Scully. After dropping out of active involvement in the LSD manufacturing scene in August 1970 Scully had continued to meet Ron Stark from time to time. The last time had been in the spring of 1972 just before Scully took off to dodge grand jury subpoenas. Eleven years later, in 1983, Scully recalls:

> ‘I remember a DEA agent walking up to me as I was on my way up my driveway to my mailbox to get the morning mail. The DEA agent told me that Ron Stark was in custody in San Francisco and wanted to know if I would

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* Tim Scully, privately circulated and fully copyrighted ‘Frequently Asked Questions’.

> be willing to meet with the US Attorney to discuss testimony at his trial. I told the DEA agent that I had made every effort to put the past behind me and that I taken too much LSD to be able to remember the details the US attorney might be interested in. I'm pretty sure that most or all of the witnesses the government had forced to testify at our original trial proved to be as uncooperative since the government no longer had the leverage on them that it once had, i.e., the threat of prosecution for offenses that were now many years in the past and outside the statute of limitations'.

While Stark was in prison in San Francisco he acted as his own attorney and filed numerous motions with the court including a discovery motion for the evidence the government held. Government prosecutors tried to delay proceeding with the indictment because they had more boxes of filed documents in storage than they had resources to sort. Stark filed a motion for dismissal of the indictment, making the point that the government had known exactly where he was when he was in Italian custody but made no attempt to extradite him.

On December 8 1983, US Attorney General Joseph Russoniello, of San Francisco, wrote:

> 'Defendant Stark has moved to dismiss the indictment in this case on various grounds related to delay in prosecution. While the United States does not agree with the claimed justification for dismissal argued by the defendant, the United States cannot at this time proceed to trial against defendant Stark. The court has previously been briefed at other hearings on the nature of the government's evidence and regarding problems that have arisen in locating key witnesses abroad as well as important documentary evidence. Because these problems have persisted, the government cannot now proceed to trial with this case. Accordingly, leave is sought to dismiss this case without prejudice...'

Judge Conti, the trial judge at the Sand-Scully conspiracy trial granted the government's motion and dismissed the case without prejudice.

When the Bologna prosecutor sought Stark's extradition to face the charges against him in Italy, a copy of the wanted-man's

death certificate, dated 8 May 1984, arrived from the US authorities. The California Death Index lists Ronald Hadley Stark, social security number 13672043, born 9 April 1938 in New York, died 8 May 1984 in San Francisco. His mother's mother's maiden name is recorded as Weinbaum. A friend of Tim Scully who was close to Stark, spoke to him on the telephone the day before he died: Stark was flying on cocaine and died the next day of a cocaine-induced heart attack.

It is true that the multitude of terrains Stark straddled – populated by Palestinian and Italian guerrillas, psychedelic revolutionaries, sections of the New Left in various countries, money launderers, etc – were precisely those areas the CIA would, or should, have been interested in. In a previous book (*Acid Outlaws*) I speculated that if Stark had a deep connection the CIA, it might have been similar to that of the international heroin smugglers of the 1950s, who were allowed to ply their deadly trade because it served the CIA to have a 'handle' on it for political purposes. That being the case, I argued, Stark's history was consistent with him having 'worked within the brief of the CIA's Operation Chaos'. I now think that this was unwarranted. *If* the CIA had at any point tried to establish a relationship with Stark – which they might have done, considering his documented contacts with American diplomats – then it is probable that either he would have tried to con them just like he tried to con everyone else, or they would have realised he was too unreliable to be of any use to them. In Scully's assessment,

> Ron Stark was a very charming, playful, very intelligent pathological liar and con artist. He fooled me for many years. He presented himself to me as a sophisticated international businessman on the boards of directors of a number of large multinational corporations, a PhD biochemist and an MD medical doctor. He was none of those things but he could put up an amazingly good front.*

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* Scully FAQ. op. cit.

13 — Tricksters

> ‘Revolution is an art that I pursue rather than a goal I expect to achieve. Nor is this a source of dismay; a lost cause can be as spiritually satisfying as a victory’.
>
> Robert A. Heinlein, *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*

> ‘The guy Stark. I was accused of heading this ring. I never met Stark. Never knew he existed. I heard he was a European money launderer. But that was not relevant to what was going on out here. What is relevant to your question is ... yes, the CIA did distribute LSD. As a matter of fact, the DEA (the Drug Enforcement Agency) is out there right now setting up phony busts, setting up people, selling dope. And it's well known that during the Reagan administration Ollie North was shipping up tons of cocaine to buy money to give to the Contras and the Iranians. The CIA has always used drugs very cynically. They run opium poppy plantations in the golden triangle of Thailand and Burma because it helps the anti-communist groups there. The CIA doesn't care about drugs, they're just interested in playing their game of power and control, and in the old days, anti-communist provocation’.*
>
> Timothy Leary

Steve Abrams recalled that one of Ronald Stark’s favourite books was Robert Heinlein’s sci-fi classic of 1965, *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress.* Set in 2075, Heinlein’s novel is about a penal colony on the Moon, whose three million inhabitants are housed in huge domes containing artificial atmospheres. The colony is brutally administered by a United Nations-appointed governor, whose regime the revolutionaries try to overthrow. One of them, Professor Bernardo de la Paz, explains:

> ‘…revolutions are not won by enlisting the masses. Revolution is a science for the few who are competent to

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* The Sannyas Nick Sand Web Site http://serendipity.nofadz.com/sand/

> practice it. It depends on correct organization and, above all, on communications'.

The conspiracy starts with three people (more than three 'can't agree on where to have dinner' he says). These three in turn recruit two other people to form three new cells, and so on until a large network of cells is built up, resembling a pyramid-of-pyramids:

> 'Where vertices are in common, each bloke knows one in an adjoining cell… Communications never break down because they run sideways as well as up and down. Something like a neural net.'

The revolutionaries' conspiracy is helped by a miraculous super-computer, which is so powerful and complex that it 'wakes up' and becomes 'self-conscious'. The computer develops a sense of 'humour' about the 'stupidity' of the colony administrators, plus a will to overthrow them. The conspirators use the computer to set up front companies and fraudulently appropriate funds on the terrestrial stock exchanges. They then use the money to set up secret facilities for development of revolutionary war technology. In this scenario then, the artificial intelligence of Big Brother's Brain, as scientific rationality, can be detached from ruling class control and harnessed to the revolution, as an electronic *trickster*. As a 'rational anarchist' the Prof believes that the concept of the State has no existence except as 'physically exemplified in the acts of self-responsible individuals'. This implies that collaboration with the state is justifiable as a disguise within the strategy of undermining it from the inside. The revolutionary leader, as trickster, practices systematic deception of everyone apart from those who are required to be 'in the know' for particular functions.

Steve Abrams recalled that another book Stark was fond of was Carlos Castenada's *The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge* (1968). This was also a favourite Timothy Leary, who wrote:

> 'Castenada's skilful description of the trickster-teacher working in furtive secrecy, playing deceptive games, privately laughing at those he can con with his humble peasant façade, is brilliantly exemplified in Castenada's way of life. The poignant problem of tricksterism is that it derives from the hunter-gatherer stage of human

> evolution. The furtive stalking mode leaves the wizard alone in a dark world of stealth and jungle insecurity, a paranoid universe of competing black magicians'.*

If Stark operated as a one-man intelligence agency – working as secretly and duplicitously as he deemed necessary – Leary, as he said of himself, 'proceeded as an intelligence agent... understanding that the next war for control of this planet and beyond, had to do with the control of consciousness', whilst courting more publicity than he could handle. †

Asked by Paul Krasner in the 1990s about the legacy of the CIA's MK-Ultra program Leary said that the 'current CIA line' was 'Yes, it is true. When we learned that the Chinese Communists were using LSD, the CIA naturally cornered the whole world market for Sandoz LSD'. The problem for the CIA, in its infatuation with LSD, was that despite efforts to monitor and control of LSD production distribution, it had no real idea of what LSD actually was; and those in the CIA orbit who did have some understanding of its properties were either unable or unwilling to tell their bosses anything except what they wanted to hear. Leary was disparaging about the agencies intellectual inertia:

> 'They didn't realize that LSD comes in a millionth of a gram. The CIA found LSD to be unpredictable. Well, no shit... Can you name one accurate CIA prediction? The fall of the Shah? The rise of the Ayatollah?'

There are however, a number of statements attributed to Leary, which suggest that his attitude to the CIA – or at least elements within it – was not always adversarial. In an interview for *High Times* magazine in February 1978, Leary said:

> 'If you look back, many things that we thought were accidents turned out were not accidents. The entire LSD movement itself was sponsored originally by the CIA, to whom I give great credit. I would not be here today if it had not been for the foresight and prestige of the CIA

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* Leary, Flashbacks, p.382.

† Walter H Bowart, 'Lords of the Revolution: Timothy Leary and the CIA or The Spy Who Came In From the (Ergot) Mold, 1996. 'http://www.whale.to/b/bowart8.html

> psychologists, so give the CIA credit for being truly an intelligence agency'.

Asked by Walter Bowart, author of *Operation Mind Control*, 'Do you think CIA people were involved in your group in the sixties?', Leary responded,

> 'Of course they were. I would say that eighty percent of my movements, eighty percent of the decisions I made were suggested to me by CIA people… I like the CIA! The game they're playing is better than the FBI. Better than the Saigon police. Better than Franco's police. Better than the Israeli police. They're a thousand times better than the KGB. So it comes down to: whom are you going to work for? The Yankees or the Dodgers?'

Leary, having told Bowart that from 1962 on he operated as an 'intelligence agent', added,

> 'I'm raising the intelligence of an elite... a very elite group of Americans... So I think the future of freedom depends on a very small group of people who are smart enough to defend that liberty... nobody ever recruited me. People came and advised me to do this or that. I didn't know that I was being advised by the CIA. I assume now, that I was being advised by the CIA..."*

When Leary was trying to leave Algeria for Europe in 1971, an Algerian bureaucrat, 'who made no bones about his connection to the CIA', helped obtain exit visas. Asked by Rosemary if he could be trusted, Leary replied, 'He's liberal CIA and that's the best Mafia you can deal with in the twentieth century'.†

Leary insisted, 'nobody ever recruited me. People came and advised me to do this or that. I didn't know that I was being advised by the CIA'. Referring to his work during the 1950s in personality assessment, some of which was sponsored by CIA front organisations, Leary added, 'I'm talking about a very narrow segment of CIA activity

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* Ibid.

† Leary, *Flashbacks*, p.308.

which has to do with personality assessment... all personality assessment in the 1950's was basically CIA initiated...'*

What Leary and Stark had in common is striking: leadership qualities, scientific background, interest in psychology and psychedelics, ruthlessness, recklessness, association with the Brotherhood of Eternal Love, association with terrorist groups, and a preparedness to inform on associates to get out of jail. But whereas Ronald Stark's claim that he had been a US intelligence agent since the early 1960s was demonstrably false, Leary's denial that he had ever by 'recruited' – at least in the direct sense – is credible. Whatever importance we give to Leary's crediting the CIA with the birth of psychedelia, it was Leary himself who gave the LSD-fuelled counterculture its character; without him it just wouldn't have happened the way it did.

* Bowart, op.cit.

14 – Acid 2.0: Redux or Recuperation?

Herman Kahn's prediction back in the 1960s that there would be two nations in the US, one of which would be 'dropped out', turned out to be half-right: many of the dropped out acid freaks later dropped back in as innovators in computer technology and artificial intelligence. Between 1961 and 1965, Myron Stolaroff and Jim Fadiman of the International Foundation for Advanced Study dosed hundreds of volunteer knowledge workers, such as scientists and architects, to test LSD as a problem-solving drug. An architect ‘had a vision of the building so complete he could see how many spaces there were in the car park and the size of the bolts holding the beams together’. A designer of circuits in semiconductors said he was 'able to lay out the board in his mind and watch electricity surging through it to see where it broke’.

Fadiman’s work was curtailed in 1966 when the US government forced the shut-down of research into psychedelics. But his book, *The Psychedelic Explorer’s Guide* (published in 2011) has been hugely successful as a manual for microdosing, i.e. ingesting 10-20 µg a couple of times week as opposed to 200 to 500 for a real psychedelic experience.

The young Silicon Valley entrepreneurs are contemptuous of the Acid Tests of the 1960s. The new historical revisionism portrays the hippies as having set the psychedelic cause back fifty years with their 'rash and reckless’ behaviour which supposedly panicked the government of the day into bureaucratic blocking of research into LSD and repression of 'responsible' users of the drug. But rejection of the legacy of the 'sixties 'movement' is at the same time the rehabilitation of ideas first formulated in the CIA-sponsored think tanks of the same era. The Acid 2.0 generation favours decriminalisation and the re-establishment of research programs into the uses and possible benefits of psychedelic substances such as LSD,

ayahuasca and peyote. Alfred M Hubbard – and possibly even Sidney Gottlieb – might have approved.

The *Financial Times'* Hannah Kuchler sums up the practical consequences of the historical revisionism:

> 'Silicon Valley's microdosers want to overcome the drug's notoriety, harnessing the tech industry's talent at transforming global habits to make the psychedelic as acceptable as coffee. San Francisco became the acid capital of the world in the 1960s, when hippies, inspired to alter their consciousness by Buddhists and Native Americans, ran wild. Now, the city is spearheading the microdosing movement, with tech workers taking their cue from Steve Jobs, Apple's co-founder, who said LSD was one of the "two or three most important things" he did in his life. While some, like Jobs, take full-blown trips, increasingly LSD is consumed in doses where the effects are subtle and do not interfere with everyday life... Tim Ferriss, tech investor and author of *The Four Hour Work Week*, has said almost all the billionaires he knows regularly take hallucinogens. Where the Diggers, a group of performance artists-cum-charity workers, once gave out free food in the Haight, tech workers today pursue stock options to pay for $10 toast and $1m apartments. Where art, music and fashion used to blossom, boutique exercise studios and green juice makers attempt to fill a cultural vacuum'.*

With the intensification of the 'culture wars' within the United States of America, the Republican conservatives of the 'red states' remain as hostile as ever to the Californian 'cognitive libertarians', who are still risking their freedom to obtain psychedelic drugs. In the US, anyone caught possessing enough LSD for a hundred trips faces a minimum penalty of five years in prison and up to a $2m fine. In the UK, simple possession can land the offender in prison for up to seven years. The War on Drugs has increased the combined number of prisoners in US

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* Hannah Kuchler, 'How Silcon Valley Rediscovered LSD', *Financial Times*, 10 Aug 2017.

Federal and State prisons serving sentences for drug offences to over 288,000. In Britain, out of an exploded prison population of 95,000, some 15,000 are in for drugs offences.

Central to the appeal of cognitive libertarianism is its ambivalent anti-authoritarianism, which envisages a world in which boring robotic work will be taken over by artificial intelligence, leaving humans to concentrate on personal skills like creativity – enhanced by psychedelic drugs. The present-day regulators of narcotics are seen by the libertarians as still stuck in the moral panics of the 1960s, and lagging behind developments in research in the same way that regulators of finance are seen as failing to keep up with the runaway growth of global corporations and development in artificial intelligence.

Michael Pollan's book *How to Change Your Mind: What the New Science of Psychedelics Teaches Us About Consciousness, Dying, Addiction, Depression, and Transcendence*, published in 2018, was reviewed very positively in the mainstream media. Harvard professor Pollan argues that psychedelic drugs such as LSD, when administered and supervised by trained professionals, can provide personally transformative help for people suffering such afflictions as substance abuse and terminal illness. Pollan says that a new climate favourable to psychedelic research practice began to emerge in 2006, when John Hopkins University neuroscientist Roland Griffiths published a landmark paper based on new trials. According to a Hopkins press release:

> 'Using unusually rigorous scientific conditions and measures, John Hopkins researchers have shown that the active agent in "sacred mushrooms" can induce mystical/spiritual experiences descriptively identical to spontaneous ones people have reported for centuries. The resulting experiences apparently prompt positive changes in behaviour and attitude that last several months, at least. The agent, a plant alkaloid called psilocybin, mimics the effect of serotonin on brain receptors – as do some other hallucinogens – but precisely where in the brain and in what manner are unknown'.

Pollan regards Timothy Leary as an irresponsible, self-aggrandising 'showboater' who attempted to weaponise LSD as a tool for

promoting the counterculture and social revolution: ‘researchers ... watched in dismay as Leary (and his “antics,” as they inevitably referred to his various stunts and pronouncements) ignited what would become a public bonfire of all their hard-won knowledge and experience’. Pollan appears to blame Leary and his followers more than the legislators who criminalised scientific research into hallucinogens and effectively transferred it from the medical profession to law enforcement agencies.

For Acid 2.0 advocates, the legacy of tricksters like Timothy Leary must be consigned to the past and future of psychedelics placed in the responsible hands of those Pollan calls ‘white-coat shamans’. The implication is that all the abusive practices by white-coat shrinks in psychiatric hospitals and prisons in the 1950s and ‘60s; and the incarcerations of drug users can be forgiven and forgotten. But blaming Leary and the counter-culture represents a neoliberal rewriting of history, which ignores the turbulent nature of the 1960s, especially the rebellions against racism and the Vietnam War which a lot of the psychedelic tricksters I have written about in this book identified with. In the Acid 2.0 narrative, the psychedelic experience, once seen as a catalyst for social change has become transformed into its opposite: a tool of semi-caffeinated conformity. In Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World*, the drug Soma combats depression, sadness, and anxiety so that people are distracted from the reality of living under a dictatorship. Huxley’s view of technology actually resembles Karl Marx’s critique of ‘commodity fetishism’. According to Huxley:

> ‘Technology tends to grow and develop according to the laws of its own being. It doesn't at all develop according to the laws of our being. The two things are quite separate, and man now finds himself subordinated to this thing which he created, and subject to its laws, which are not at all human laws. And this seems to me one of the gravest dangers which confronts us now’.

'Set and setting' of the psychedelic experience can be approached as dialectical categories. 'Set' is the 'mindset' of the subjective experience; setting is the physical and social environment in which

experience happens; as Huxley put it, 'Experience is not what happens to you; it's what you do with what happens to you'.* In psychedelic therapy, social support networks are seen as important for controlling or guiding the course of the psychedelic experience, i.e. it makes a difference whether the control or guidance comes through the 'support' of a hippie commune, a religious cult, a firm of software engineers, a tele-sales racket or a nest of spies. Psychedelic experience and political action are not necessarily mutually exclusive. From a standpoint which still upholds the possibility of social change beyond capitalism, the history unfolded in these pages suggests that if drugs didn't work, neither did the politics. They still don't.

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* Aldous Huxley, *Texts and Pretexts (1932)*.

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